

**FIVE – FOLD  
SCHOOL OF  
THEOLOGY**

**REACHING TOWARDS  
DESTINY**

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# WHAT IS A PROPHET

## Definition

A prophet is a person who speaks on behalf of God. Peter said that prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:20,21).

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

They were moved by the Spirit, so they could speak in the name of the Lord.

When calling Jeremiah, God said he would put his words in the prophet's mouth. The Lord said to him,

You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you...I have put my words in your mouth. Jer 1:7,9

**A prophet is a person with the gift of a keen ability to hear from God. They have a finely tuned ability to hear God's voice (Noel Woodlock).**

The same point is made in Deuteronomy 18:18:

I will raise up a prophet... I will put my words in his mouth and he will tell them everything that I command him.

A prophet speaks in obedience to the Lord. He says only what God tells him to say. He brings God's word to the Church and the World. Ezekiel described this as the Lord's hand being upon him.

The hand of the Lord was upon me (Ezek 37:1).

The prophet was primarily a man of the word of God. His task was to bring the word of God to his fellow man.

The prophet of God was thus the mouthpiece of God. He was God's messenger whose task was to deliver whatever God said to him. He was not simply a holy man, nor was he a man with a mission to reform the world or to accomplish any particular task of religious teaching or leadership. The Prophet was simply a "mouthpiece".

A prophet is a divine spokesperson. To speak prophetically is to speak by divine inspiration. It is the presentation of God's message for an individual, group, nation or generation. I may bring direction, correction, warning, encouragement, or instruction. Thus saith the Lord.

The picture of the prophet that emerges from the pages of Scripture and the early church writings is impressive. Rather than a mere mouthpiece who passively responds when God picks him up, the prophet is a conscious agent of God, gifted by God to be an envoy, a watchman and bearer of royal authority.

If we are to arrive at a proper conception of the function of a "nabhi", we must look elsewhere than to philology. We must examine the actual usage of the word in the Old Testament, and from such usage seek to determine what it meant. In Deuteronomy 18:18b the essential nature of the prophetic function is clearly set forth; "... and I shall place my words in his mouth and he will speak unto them all which I command him". Here the function of the prophet is that of declaring the word. Precisely this same thought also appears in the classic text, Exodus 7:1.

God declared even before his birth, Jeremiah had been sanctified and had been set apart to be a nabhi. Immediately upon hearing this announcement, Jeremiah cries that he does not know how to speak. Evidently Jeremiah, as soon as he hears that he is to be a nabhi thinks of speaking, and complains that he is unable to fulfill the function of a nabhi namely, speaking. To his mind the word nabhi called up immediately the connotation of speaking. Jeremiah was to be a nabhi therefore he would have to speak

My servants the Prophets

The definitions of the different Greek and Hebrew words translated "prophet" in the Old and New Testaments reveal that this ministry is one that speaks for God, has immediate intercourse with God, is an interpreter of the oracles of God, and preaches the counsel of God. These are all indicative of the awesome seriousness of prophetic ministry. To speak for God and interpret or preach his counsel is a responsibility of unfathomable proportions to be entrusted to mere men

(The Prophetic Ministry).

A prophet is defined more by a willingness to speak than an ability to hear. Every Christian should be able to hear God. However, only a few have the courage and boldness to speak everything that God wants spoken. Prophets have a special sense of the heart and burdens of God. They are committed to the truth. They are willing to speak God's word, regardless of the cost. God needs prophets who will speak his work fearlessly, without regard to the consequences.

They developed a keen sense of God's presence and knew when he wanted to speak to his people. They sensed his moods and his burdens of heart, even before they knew exactly what they were feeling. It was wonderful, but it also confused them because they often felt squeezed between what God wanted to do and the religious routine going on about them.

You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen (Ezek 2:7)

The task of the prophet is demonstrated in the relationship between Moses and Aaron. Moses was not a good speaker, so God said Aaron would be his "prophet". He explained what this would mean.

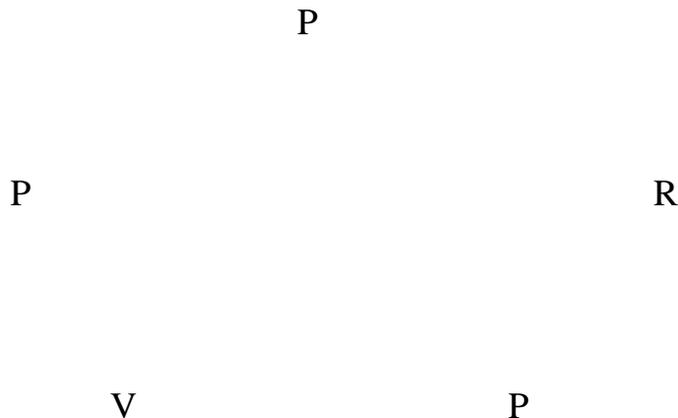
You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth.... He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him (Ex 4:15-17).

In this passage Aaron clearly appears as the mediator between Moses and Pharaoh. Moses stands in relation to Pharaoh as God to the people, and the message of Moses is given to Pharaoh by means of Aaron. Here again the function of the Prophet is that of speaking forth a message which has been received from a superior (Servants the Prophets)

## Prophets in the Church

Most prophets will function in the context of the church (a few will go on to being a prophet to the nation or nations). However, prophets will not be able to fully function in this role until we get back to the principle of plurality of leadership that is basic to the New Testament. Each church in the New Testament was led by a team of elders (Acts 14:23). The minimum number of elders would be three or four. A church should be led by a group of elders working together (Acts. 13:1).

The circles in the diagram below represent the elders of a church. The lines represent their commitment to each other and the relationships between them. The strength of these links between the elders is the source of the strength of the church. (For more on how this works, refer to )



Paul describes the role of elders in his letter to the Ephesians. Their role is to build up the body of Christ to maturity. There are four different functions that are necessary for this to happen.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blow here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ (Eph 4:11-15)

Building up the body of Christ is the responsibility of the elders, so these gifts represent different tasks that an elder may do. An elder can be an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, or a pastor and teacher. Each elder will fulfill one of these functions, according to the gifts that Christ has given him. All of these ministries should be represented in the church eldership. One of two of these elders will be a prophet (R). One will be an evangelist (E). Several will be pastors (P).

Prophets, evangelists and pastors are just elders. Having all these ministries present in the eldership gives balance to the church. Without this balance the Church will not grow to maturity and unity. The prophet ( P ) will provide vision for the church and keep it on the right track. He will ensure that there is an emphasis on holiness. A prophet is really an elder, who has a passion for truth and righteousness. He asks the tough questions; challenges church members with besetting sins and specializes in getting vision for the church.

The prophetic ministry is a fundamental aspect of the eldership. Without a prophet, a church will be weak in vision and at risk of sinfulness. The pastor will have to copy other successful churches to obtain vision. The reason that we have so many immature and weak churches is prophets are missing from the leadership of the Church. (Likewise without an evangelist the church will not grow).

Since most churches are centred around a pastor, many prophets have become pastors to find a place of ministry. This is not a solution, because but the church operates best when elders are functioning in their true ministry and not trying to be something they are not.

The main reason that the prophetic ministry is not functioning correctly in the modern church is that the leadership is not functioning correctly. All of the ascension ministries of leadership are needed for a local church to grow to maturity. Prophets must be part of the foundation of the church.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and Members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking different kinds of tongues (1 Cor. 12:27,28).

Many of the spiritual gifts required will be manifested in other church members, but the ascension gifts must be manifested in the eldership of a church. One person cannot exercise all these ministries. This leaves no alternative but plurality of leadership. We desperately need the gifts of leadership that Jesus gave us, especially the prophets.

### **Who should be in Charge**

There is a serious argument going on about authority in the church. Some people say that prophets do not need to submit to anyone, but God himself. Others say that everyone including the prophets must submit to a pastor. Still others say that apostles will govern the church and that pastors and prophets will both submit to the apostles. All these views are wrong. The Bible is quite clear.

Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ Eph. 5:21.

Apostles, pastors, prophets and evangelists are not above this command. They are required to submit to each other out of reverence for Jesus; just like all other Christians.

Instead of asking who is to govern and who is to submit to them, we should be looking for a model of church government that allows all the ministries to submit to each other, as required by Ephesians. Arguing about who should be in control will only result in division and disunity.

A church needs several pastors, at least one prophet and at least one evangelist to function effectively. There will only be unity if they are all submitted to each other. The prophet should submit to the pastors, but the pastors, should also submit to the prophet. This will not be easy. Pastors, prophets and evangelists are very different from each other and are likely to have strong views about how things should be done. A great deal of love and trust will be required for them to submit to each other; but this should be normal for mature ministries. If the cross of Jesus is at work in their lives, it will be possible for these ministries to submit to each other.

Mutual submission among pastors, prophets and evangelists will be good for both them and the church. Their unity will provide balance and safety for the church. It would also be a marvelous testimony to the power of the gospel. On the other hand, if pastors and prophets cannot submit to each other, then

there is something wrong with our gospel. If the leaders of the church cannot submit to each other, then we should not be surprised if there is a lack of submission among less mature Christians.

## **Gift of Prophecy and the Ministry of the Prophet**

In recent years we have seen an increase in the manifestation of the gift of prophecy in the church. This gift is given by the Spirit for the encouragement and edification of believers. It is a gift that is available to all believers and any believer can experience it. In fact we are told that we should all earnestly seek the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:1,3). However, not everyone who prophesies is a prophet.

An Exhortation is when someone senses in their spirit that something needs to be said. It's a sermonette. The temptation to add "Saith the Lord" must be avoided. Exhortation is easier to correct than prophecy. The aim in Prophecy is quality and purity rather than quantity (Jeremiah).

It takes humility to know the difference between prophecy and exhortation. Exhortation is not prophecy (Prophecy).

You can have spiritual gifting and insight, but that does not mean God has set you in a position of governing authority. God gives gifts to men by His Spirit, but the governing offices are established by the Lord Jesus. We get into trouble when we mistake gifts for offices.

There is a difference between the gift of prophecy, and the ministry of a prophet. Being a prophet is an eldership ministry and a calling from God. A prophet is an elder called to speak the word of God. He is a spokesman for God. Whereas the gift of prophecy can be given to any believer as the Spirit wills, the ministry of the prophet is a calling on a person's life. It is this ministry that the church really needs.

In practice, there will be a continuum of gifting. Some people will give an occasional prophecy (this is where most prophets begin). Others may prophesy more frequently. Some people who are appointed as elders may be just beginning in the prophetic. Others elders may have developed into a fuller prophetic ministry. The main goal is for all Christians to develop into their

ministry. We should not constrain people by trying to put precise labels on them. They should be free to be what God has called and equipped them to be.

When surveying the landscape of the prophetic movement today, often humility, holiness, and spiritual maturity are lacking in those who claim to be voices for God. Sadly, pride presumption, and a lack of spiritual maturity are far more visible in their lives.

Titles, in and of themselves, are not bad. But our flesh being what it is, we tend to love self-glorification, and human applause. By giving ourselves the title of “prophet” we are yearning for distinction and recognition. But we need to beware, doing so is giving in to the subtle, religiously acceptable means of calling attention to our gift.

For those of us who still feel entitled to use the title “prophet” should note that Scripture only records two instances where people identified themselves as prophets. The first is in 1 Kings 13:8 where the old prophet meets a younger prophet and says, “I am a prophet just like you” and so convinces him to go home with him. But listening to the old prophet cost the younger prophet his life. The second instance occurs in the Book of Revelation and refers to Jezebel, “...who calls herself a prophetess” (Revelation 2:20)

## **No Prophetic Heroes**

The danger in these definitions and the quotes in this section is that they make being a “prophet” sound too big. The reason is that they are based on the Old Testament, where prophets tended to stand apart from the priests and kings. Only a few heroes had the necessary anointing of the Spirit. In the New Testament, the definition of the prophet has not changed. A prophet is still a spokesperson for God, but the context in which they function has changed. Instead of standing apart, prophets should be an integral part of the leadership of the church. Since the coming of the Spirit, a person does not need to be Elijah or Jeremiah, to be a prophet or a spokesperson for God. In the same way you don’t, need to be a Billy Graham to be an evangelist. A prophet is usually just an elder who fulfills the prophetic role in the leadership of the church.

In the Old Testament the prophetic ministry was limited to a few heroes. With the coming of the Spirit this calling will be much more widespread. Prophets should be everywhere. The intensity of their gifting may not always be as strong as Elijah or Jeremiah, but prophetic ministry should be widespread. Every church should have a prophet.

## **Men and Women**

The ministry of the prophet is not limited to men. A woman can also be prophet (or prophetess).

Even on my servants, both men and women, I will  
Pour out my Spirit in those days and they will prophesy (Act 2:18).

Miriam was a prophetess (Num 12:6). So were the daughters of Philip the evangelist.

He had four virgin daughters who were Prophetesses (Act 21:8, 9 NASB)

Other examples of prophetesses are Deborah and Anna.

Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time. She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came to her to have their disputes decided (Jud 4:4,5). There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was Eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem (Luke 2:36-38).

In these notes I often refer to a prophet as “he” or “him”. This is for simplicity of language. Everything I say about prophets also applies to prophetesses.

## **Times and Seasons**

Every prophet is different and unique. We should not try to put them all into the same mould. God always has the right person for the time and situation.

God has always had his specialists whose chief concern had been moral breakdown, the decline in the spiritual health of the nation and the church. Such men were Elijah, Jeremiah, Malachi, and others of their kind who appeared at critical moments in history to reprove rebuke and exhort in the name of God and righteousness.

Jeremiah was God's man for a nation flying apart (David Pawson Jeremiah).

The institution of prophecy, therefore is to be regarded as a gift of God. It is he who raised up the prophets and gave them their messages. They were not merely men of religious genius, nor did they appear because Israel was a particularly religious nation.

George Wishart was believed by his contemporaries to have spoken under the influence of prophetic inspiration. John Knox says, "He was not only singularly learned, as well in Godly knowledge as in all honest human science, but he was also so clearly illumined with the spirit of prophecy, that he not only saw not only pertaining to himself, but also such things as some towns and the whole realm afterward felt, which he spoke not in secret but in the audience of many (Torrance).

In this connection we must remember that the entire prophetic institution was a gift from God. It was not an expression of the religious nature of the people, but a Divine gift. The prophets were raised up of God: they did not emerge from the national religious consciousness. As the spokesman of God they uttered their messages wherever God commanded them to do so (Servants the Prophets).

## **Preachers**

Some preachers are prophets, but not all preachers are prophets. Apostles, evangelists and pastors can all preach. However, there is something different about the preaching of a prophet.

Mere preachers may help anybody and hurt nobody: but prophets will stir everybody and madden somebody. The preacher goes with the crowd; the prophet goes against it. A man freed, fired, and filled with God will be branded unpatriotic because he speaks against his nation's sins; unkind because his tongue is a two edged sword, unbalanced because the weight of preaching opinion is against him. The preacher will be heralded, the prophet will be hounded.

God has always had His specialists whose chief concern has been the moral breakdown, the decline in the spiritual health of the nation of the church. Such men were Elijah, Jeremiah, Malachi and other of their kind who appeared at critical moments in history to reprove, rebuke, and exhort in the name of God and righteousness.

A thousand or ten thousand ordinary priests or pastors or teachers could labour quietly on almost unnoticed while the spiritual life of Israel or the church was normal. But let the people of God go astray from the paths of truth and immediately the specialist appeared almost out of nowhere. He instinct for trouble brought him to the help of the Lord and of Israel. Such a man was likely to be drastic, radical, possibly at times violent, and the curious crowd that gathered to watch him work soon branded him as extreme, fanatical, negative. And in a sense they were right. He was single-minded, severe, fearless, and these were the qualities the circumstances demanded. He shocked some, frightened others and alienated not a few, but he knew who had called him and what he was sent to do. His ministry was geared to the emergency, and that fact marked him out as different, a man apart. To such men as this the church owes a debt too heavy to pay. The curious thing is that she seldom tries to pay him while he lives, but the next generation builds his sepulchre and writes his biography, as if instinctively and awkwardly to discharge an obligation the previous generation to a large extent ignored.

## **Watching**

There is a watching aspect of the ministry of a prophet. In fact one of the words for prophet is the Hebrew word Seer.

Formerly in Israel, if a man went to inquire of God, he would say, "Come, let us go to the seer", because the prophet of today used to be called a seer (1 Sam 9:9)

Seers are men of revelation. Seers are men of enlightenment. Seers are men of intellectual maturity.... The prophet is a seer. The basic nature of his commission is observation and watchfulness. He is prone to contemplation and skilled in the art of deduction.

(Seer)

Isaiah described the prophets as the “eyes” of the church or nation.

The Lord brought over you a deep sleep;  
He has sealed your eyes (the prophets);  
He has covered your heads (the seers). (Isa 29:10).

Balaam was a false prophet, yet the Lord used him when the Spirit came on him. He said some good things about how a prophet needs to have his eyes opened to see what God is doing.

The oracle of Balaam son of Beor, the oracle of one whose eye sees clearly, the oracle of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:  
(Num 24:4)

Prophets are people of vision, who can see what God is doing. They cooperate with God in breaking down all that is not built on the true foundation. They do this by announcing his judgements. At the same time they watch over all that God is building to see that it is built according to his Word. This is why the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph 2:20).

God is restoring a watchman anointing to His people. In biblical times, though a city had strong walls and double gates, security was not complete without watchmen in their places, shouting, or heralding, anything they saw that was out of the ordinary. Their job was to warn the people of impending danger. They would pay with their lives if they failed to inform the city of an enemy’s approach. If the watchmen were not alert, cities could fall, territories could be lost and many people could be slaughtered or forced into captivity.

Today’s spiritual watchmen are just as important to the kingdom of God. But the Church has become so familiar and comfortable with the world that our watchmen may not notice when adverse conditions enter our boundaries. In this hour God is saying, “watch the boundaries I have set for you, so that the enemy does not gain access to your inheritance”.

They do not want to build 'a church', they want the whole city or nation! They live in the future, for the future, from the future, constantly pregnant with future developments, and they can prevent it from becoming a traditional institution only celebrating the past, or a fossilized monument of history long gone.

## **Urgent**

Prophets are absolutely essential for the purification of his Church. The most urgent need in the church today, is the restoration of the prophetic ministry, God cannot complete his work until the prophetic ministry is restored. God promised that he would never leave his people without prophets who could speak his word.

In Deuteronomy 18:18, God promises his people that he will always provide them with a prophet who will speak his word.

I will raise up for them a prophet like you (Moses) from among their brothers. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything that I command him.

This promise had an ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, but it is also a promise that we should claim for our time.

## THE CALLING

A prophet must be called by God. The initiative in making a prophet always rests with him. It is not a ministry that anyone can take up. Only a false prophet dares to take up this ministry for himself. The true prophetic ministry always begins with a call from God. Isaiah had a very dramatic call (Isaiah 6: 1-8). He needed this to sustain him through a difficult and disappointing ministry.

Jeremiah's calling came in a specific word from God when he was quite young.

The word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." "Ah, Sovereign Lord, "I said, " I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, and to build and to plant" (Jer 1:4-10).

Amos was going about his business when he received his call. He was not from a prophetic family and did not expect or desire a prophetic ministry. Prophetic ambition can be dangerous.

Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom." Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel. 'Now then, hear the word of the Lord. You say, " Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the house of Isaac" ' (Amos 7:12 – 16).

Only God can call a prophet. It is a sovereign choice of God. He can tell anyone. The call often comes suddenly (The coming of the prophets).

Before there is a prophet in making, there is a royal command. Most likely the things and the men that are not are chosen for the task to nullify the things that are, 1 Cor 1: 28 . Prophets are commissioned sent by royal command. Prophets are ambassadors – speaking and acting on behalf of a peculiar nation not belonging to this world. They are seldom welcomed, at least not by the undisciplined, disobedient crowd. He is certainly recognized, but rarely accepted. To label him a recognized prophet is to disarm him and lock him into the system that he is sent to confront.

He had the greatness to obey a call to service, which was contrary to all natural instincts; yet he went on and served his Lord over many years. (Jeremiah).

If we have a true ministry, opposition and failure will not deter us – we must continue to minister because of the inner compulsion which results from God’s call.

The heavens were opened and I saw a vision of God. The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel. The hand of the Lord was upon him. These three words: vision, word and hand became experiential in the life of this young prophet in the most tragic hour of his nation’s history.

God revealed himself to Ezekiel in personal encounter. The rabbis who insisted that no one under the age of thirty should read this part of Ezekiel’s book were conscious that they were standing on Holy Ground. So was Ezekiel; he could only fall on his face as dead.

This was the setting of his commission to prophesy and from it carried with him through the whole of his ministry a sense of awe and holy fear. It is the true prophet’s hallmark in every generation. The false prophets can chatter glibly about God, because he has never met him. The man of God comes out of his presence indelibly marked with the Glory of his God.

By other Christians. A calling that is not recognized by other Christians is often self-appointed and not a true calling.

However, if we are called to this watchman ministry, let us be patient in waiting for our replacement. If we have a true gift, and manifest the fruit of the Spirit, our gift will make a place for us. Our goal must always be first to gain the endorsement of God, not men. If we want the endorsement of God we must be devoted to truth, integrity, and submission to His Spirit. If it takes others a while to acknowledge our calling, while we are waiting we can grow in grace and discernment.

## **Marks of a Prophet:**

1. Zeal for God's will.
2. Foresight into God's plan.
3. Insight into God's plan.

Call is confirmed by preparation. Those whom God calls are also prepared by God. There is often a long time gap between God's calling and entry into ministry. This calls for patience. Preparation may take a lot longer than we expect, but God's standards are high.

After every calling and envisioning comes a time of death and burial. It is called preparation, as the Lord puts our call on the shelf and deals with who we are as people. During this "in the ground" time, the reality of the call leaves us for a time. Therefore, when suddenly someone begins to restate our call prophetically, it may be the time when the Lord is opening doors and making things happen  
(Developing your Prophetic Ministry)

Those with a prophetic calling must be prepared to pay the price. It is not just at the end, but all throughout in a special experience in humiliation and self-deprivation, which is uniquely known to prophets  
(The Heart of a Prophet).

The Man of God was just that - he was a man of God. Those God uses call themselves what God calls them. Not more than that. Not less either. This man may well have been called to be a prophet, but the appointment had not yet come - and he did not use the title. We would do well to observe this principle today  
(1 Kings 13:1)

Prophets are commissioned, sent by royal command. Prophets are ambassadors - speaking and acting on behalf of a peculiar nation not belonging to this world. They are seldom welcomed, at least not by the undisciplined, disobedient crowd. He is certainly recognized but rarely accepted. To label him a recognized prophet is to disarm him and lock him into the system, which he is sent to confront. A true prophet is not an attraction in crowded auditoriums.  
(Lars widerberg - Aspects of the Prophetic office - The Forthteller)

Prophets may resist their calling, as Jonah did his - with dire results.

## **Confirmation**

Calling from God is essential for every Christian ministry. Acting without calling is presumption. Calling is particularly important for the prophetic ministry. The prophet who is not called is self-appointed and self-appointed prophets are very dangerous.

Such election is far tougher for the prophet. Not only may a man not become a prophet unless God calls, he may become a prophet only by responding in obedience when He calls, as He calls

Prophets are always called in many different ways, at different times, and under different circumstances.

The proof that a prophet has been called is the fact that his words are effective and fulfilled. A good example of this is Samuel.

All of Israel knew that Samuel was a prophet, because the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground (1 Samuel 2:8,29)

Calling comes from God, but it will also be confirmed and encouraged.

## THE PROPHETIC VOICE

The most urgent need of the modern church is for the restoration of the prophetic ministry. In recent years the gift of prophecy has been rediscovered, but there is still a desperate shortage of prophets. The church will not come to true maturity until God has raised up prophets among his people.

For nearly two millennia the public prophetic voice has been silent. Now in our time it is being restored

There are five reasons why prophets are urgently needed in our time;

### 1. **Solid Foundations**

The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph 2:20). A building with a faulty foundation will not be able to stand, and will eventually collapse. Without the prophetic ministry the foundation of the church is incomplete, so it cannot rise to full maturity. A strong church needs the righteousness that only comes when prophets are present. The modern church has millions of pastors, but only a few prophets. This is a serious imbalance, which makes the church unbalanced.

**Until the relationship between leaders and watchmen is re-established properly, the watchmen cannot function and the leader will continue to be needlessly blind-sided by the enemy**

### 2. Time of Transformation

We are living in a time of transformation, when God intends to purify and strengthen his church. His purpose will be accomplished in a time of “shaking”. Judgement begins first in the household of God, so that it may be refined and purified. The ministry of the prophet is very important at these times. Joel connects the shaking and the out pouring of the Holy Spirit, with an increase in prophesying. This is because God cannot act, without first giving a warning through his prophets.

Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. Amos 3:7

God cannot shake the Church, until he has announced it through his prophets. There are two reasons for this.

- i. God is merciful and always gives his people an opportunity to repent, before he sends a judgement. God would be happier if he did not have to shake the church. He gives a warning, hoping that his people will put things right. But if the warning is not heeded, God has no alternative but to act himself.
- ii It is important that any shaking of the church is recognized as coming from the hand of God. If it is seen as just a normal event, it can be ignored. An event that has been announced beforehand by God's servants, is obviously a work of God, and its meaning will be clear. The fact that it has been announced beforehand by God's servants will be proof that it is a work of God.

Prophetic activists and national apostasy are often associated.

The prophet knows what time it is, knows that kind of time it is. He holds prophetic understanding of the mentality and mood of this present time. He identifies and knows the trends of a society by looking at its roots. He is able to analyse trends and upcoming events by judging foundations. His words are a force against the mentality of the day.

Sin inevitably brings divine judgement. Jerusalem the Holy City collapses, not because the enemy was stronger but because God decreed it. The fall of Jerusalem is represented as a divine judgement against sin. Human rebellion against God, not weakness caused the collapse of the Holy city.

### 3. Lack of Direction

There is a lack of direction in the modern church. Many Christians just go from fad to fad. One year it is "inner healing" and the next year it is "laughing in the Spirit"; but many of these things are not followed through to completion. The Bible says that without a vision the people will perish. (Prov. 29:18). A dearth of prophets God requires men with a vision. To do a great work only requires one man with a vision who is prepared to burn himself out for it. God takes a man and burns a vision into his heart. To be a disciple means that God has to take everything that person has. If a vision is to be fulfilled we must give everything for it.

#### 4. Shattered Hopes

In the troubled times that lie ahead many people will have their hope shattered. The plans and the prophets to which they have given their lives will collapse. Often they will feel as if God has abandoned them. Prophets will be needed to give new vision to the people of God in times of shaking.

We must recognize the danger of despair that comes with extinguishing dreams. In their troubled times that lie ahead many will believe that their dreams have died. Theologically they will believe that God has abandoned them. If the church in our time is to avoid despair we must construct the new vision of God's presence in the midst of our judgement (Bruce Bint).

With the shattering changes – political, economic and technological – that have been thrust upon the twentieth century world it is a small wonder that the generation facing the close of the second millennium and peering uncertainly into the uncharted waters of the twenty first century are crying out for divine guidance.

God raises special people for special times and the times dictate the strength of God's hand upon the person.

Prophets will be able to explain how God is at work in what appears to be a disaster. And because they can see what lies ahead, they will be able to give direction for the future.

Prophets arise in times of crisis. Their message is always relevant to the contemporary situation. The encounter with prophecy is always at the frontier of the social and religious. The factors that give rise to prophecy are always both sociological and religious.

When Israel was in trouble and needed a deliverer, God sent a prophet.

They (Midian) invaded the land to ravage it. Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help. When the Israelites cried to the Lord because of Midian, he sent them a prophet (Jud 6:6,7).

Building faith and hope is one of the functions of the prophetic gift. Jeremiah was able to obey God in the midst of troubling circumstances because he had been given a picture of the future.

## 5. Powerful Prophecy

The restoration of the prophetic gift has been a great blessing to the church, but much of the prophecy that is given is rather tame. This is not the way it should be. Paul said that if an unbeliever hears a prophecy, he will be convinced that he is a sinner and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. He will fall down and worship God, and acknowledge that the Lord is present (1 Cor 14:24,25). Prophecy with this power is not common in the church, Jeremiah said that the word of the Lord is like fire, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces. The church will only experience this kind of result, when prophets are again taking their proper place in the church.

May the Lord send us prophetic preaching that searches and scorches! Send us a race of martyr preachers – men of burdened, bent, bowed and broken under the vision of impending judgement and the doom of unending hell of the impenitent. ( L. Ravenhill – Why Revival Tarries).

And it's my contention this morning that this pulpit is no place for puppets in this day in which we live it's prophets that we need  
(Weeping Between the Porch and the Altar).

There is a power in prophecy, which nothing can stand against.  
(Ann Van Niekerk).

## 6. Assured Prophets

We are not to quench prophecy, but to test everything and hold fast to that which is good. Sometimes it can be difficult to test a prophecy because the message given is rather general. Such a prophecy may be biblically correct but it may not be what God is actually saying at the time. It is more fruitful to test prophets. They can be watched over a period of time to see if their lives bear fruit. Jesus said that this is the surest test of a prophet. A false prophet will soon become obvious through the damage that is

done by his ministry (Matt 7:15-20). Every church needs a couple of prophets, who are known to have a true ministry, and who can be relied upon to speak the word of the Lord when it is needed.

The church of God is in need of prophets who stand in the council of the Lord, to bring forth his work so that it will burn as a fire and strike as a hammer. Men like Elijah, Amos, Joel and John the Baptist who can declare God's unadulterated truth, spoken with divine authority to meet the need of the hour, both to the church and the world. Men who will come forth from God's presence, filled with this holy jealousy and consumed with a divine passion.

The prophet bears a responsibility to place himself continually in the presence of God seeking to hear the word of the Lord and asking the Lord for guidance and direction, for encouragement or rebuke. When the Christian community needs guidance, it can rightly look to its prophets for a word from the Lord.

## 7. True Justice

Social justice is becoming an important issue for the church. This is good, because God is concerned about justice. However too often the justice that is proclaimed is merely humanistic justice. The church tends to jump on the bandwagons that are being pushed by liberal humanists. Moreover, the message is too often spoken by committees or church officials, who have no real authority in the eyes of the world. The result is that their voices are lost amongst all the other voices that are speaking into modern society. If the church is to have an impact in the area of social justice, it must pray that God will raise up prophets to speak to the world.

Watchmen serve their time and their church by understanding and defining the mentality of contemporary phenomena. The prophet is a man of foundations, able to analyse the results of a common trend in society by looking at its roots. He is skilled in the art of deduction, interpretation and discernment. He, himself becomes a force against the mentality of the time and he offers understanding of how to avoid the influence of its atmosphere. This imminent force of separation and purity is the prophetic dimension. (The Seer)

Prophets should know the mind of God, so they will proclaim a standard of justice and righteousness that is true. They will know the issues that are on the heart of God and how true peace and justice can be established. Prophets will speak in the name of the

Lord, so they will have tremendous authority. God will watch over their words to ensure that they come to pass. There are many calls for the church to be prophetic, but this is impossible for a church without prophets.

As Christians we believe that God is active in the world and that his word can be heard in the events of human history. We believe it is the church's duty to proclaim what God is doing and what he would have us do. So Amos of old denounced the selfish indifference of the rich and the unjust suffering of the poor in Israel. Jeremiah who proclaimed that the inevitable judgement of a just God on his faithless people was to be seen in the fall of Jerusalem. We cannot doubt that God is at work in the turmoil of our world today, in inflation, in industrial unrest and political uncertainty, in the aspirations of the Third world. He has a word for us to proclaim to our contemporaries, a word of challenge, of judgement, of comfort and of hope. Yet the voice of the church and of Christians generally seems, strangely silent.

The good news of salvation is still being proclaimed but if a crisis is being faced, why is there no clear guidance. If the church is to give a lead in proclaiming God's word about economic and political questions, it will be those engaged in economics and politics as practitioners or as students and teachers. We need to understand what God is saying to us in the situation in which he has placed us at the present time.

## 8. Prophetic Nations

Some nations have a calling to be prophetic. They cannot achieve their destiny until the prophetic ministry is established in their midst.

There are nations that have special gifts. NZ may have a prophetic function in the world. America is called to apostolic ministry. There is something in the American nature that initiates and plants. There is something in the NZ nature that can hold truth in.

The restoration and establishment of the prophetic ministry is essential for the vitality of the church.

Has caused a lack of vision in the church. Paul says,

If the trumpet does not give a clear call, who will get ready for battle (1 Cor. 14:8).

The church needs prophets who can give this clear call to battle. At present it is losing the battle because it has no clear goal. We are surrounded by a great babble of voices all claiming to have the truth and many Christians are tossed around by every new wave that come along. A clear prophetic word is needed to prepare the church for victory.

For a people or nation to be without prophets is a sign that they are under a curse.

We are given no miraculous signs; no prophets are left, and none of us knows how long this will be (Ps 74:0).

We presently have little or no understanding of the ultimate and full purposes of God in and through his people. The church is bored stiff, lacking an orbit, a line of thought and a direction because it lacks this understanding. We condemn ourselves, therefore, to programs and services whose forms are unhappily predictable.

In both the church and in the world, there is a new hunger for the prophetic. This hunger stems from an increasing desire for guidance in order to survive the rampant confusion of our times.

The prophet sees the sweep and the purpose of God, the larger picture, the panoramic view. He is not one for the the 'nuts and bolts', for the details: 'how do you do this and that'. He sees the arching overview, and that is what the church needs to see if that is the framework of its life. Without that overview, fellowships will be fixed entirely in the present moment. They will remain in the things that are really so narrow and so petty because they cannot see what they are doing and what they are about in this moment in the context of something much larger of which they are in connection and moving toward. Without the prophetic overview, they are caught up in the immediate program, which very likely has been birthed out of their flesh or out of a necessity to "do something", and is not consciously in the continuum of things apostolic and prophetic.  
(T. Austine-Sparks – What is Prophetic Ultimacy?).

At times we need the voice of the seer – the prophet – to help us see beyond the obvious and to recognize the hand of God in our providential circumstances.

## RECEIVING THE WORD

There is only one way to receive a word from the Lord.

- Wait on the Lord
- Wait on the Lord
- Wait on the Lord
- Seek the Holy Spirit
- Seek the Holy Spirit
- Seek the Holy Spirit
- Pray
- Pray
- Pray
- Read the Word
- Read the Word
- Read the Word
- Fasting

Then do all these things some more

To recognize a person's voice, you must know him well. Prophets must develop a strong relationship with God, before they can hear his voice. The key is sitting in the presence of the Lord and walking in the Spirit. We cannot tell the Lord when he should speak. We must wait for him. Sometimes he may speak to a person two or three times in quick succession, then he may go for several years without speaking. He is sovereign, we have to wait on him to come (Jer 42:7).

Prophets must be students of history. They must also be students of contemporary events. The whole of a nation's history is a record of God's dealings with his people. The prophetic message must be spoken in this context.

One of the errors of the Pentecostal and Charismatic portion of the Church has been to cast the prophet into the mould that says he/she must be one who exhibits the supernatural gift of the prophet to prophesy, and thus will often neglect the prophetic voices of man such as

Chuck Colson or others who are clearly prophetic voices to our generation

Different people and personalities hear God in different ways. Each prophet must find the way that is best for them.

The Lord speaks to prophets through visions and dreams, and sometimes face to face.

When the prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in vision I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house with him I speak face to face; clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord (Num 12: 8).

The most important skill is to learn to hear the Holy Spirit speaking.

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you (John 16: 12 – 15).

A prophet can choose not to receive a word. Elisha did not want to seek a word of guidance for a wicked King.

But Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord through him?” An officer of the king of Israel answered, “Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.” Jehoshaphat said, “The word of the Lord is with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. Elisha said to the king of Israel, “what do we have to do with each other? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother.” “No,” the king of Israel answered, “because it was the Lord who called us three kings together to hand us over to Moab” Elisha said, “As surely as the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat King of Judah, I would not look at you or even notice you. But now bring me a harpist”. While the harpist was playing, the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha (2 Kings 3:11-15).

Sometimes worship or song may help the prophet to hear the Lord speak. This is why Elisha wanted the harp to play.

Lloyd Phillips lists twelve ways that we can hear from God.

### **1. Impressions**

An impression is like a feeling or intuition. Often I get the sense that the Spirit is pressing upon me in a certain way. This is a form of discernment. The still small voice really is under this category. We are all in that category as far as we can receive through the voice of God and then speak it.

### **2. A knowing or witness**

Romans 9:1 says, “I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit”. We all have an inner witness. It is called Christ in you. It is the mind of Christ that tells us what we ought to do or ought not to do.

### **3. We can feel things**

We can receive things in the emotions of our soul and in our bodies. The word does not come through your flesh, but the word can effect the flesh. Often I have had the sense that the Spirit is touching a part of my body in order to communicate a message to me.

### **4. Visions**

The first and most common manifestation of visions are visions of the spirit in the heart. The eyes can be opened or closed. Seeing a vision and interpreting what is being seen are not one and the same.

### **5. Supernatural senses.**

In this level the first senses are amplified in sensitivity and ability. One can experience ‘x-ray vision’ giving the ability to see through something or a heightened sense of smell or hearing. One may hear a sound of conversation across a distance, which could not be heard with your physical senses.

## **6. Dreams**

The next level is dreams. They are seen all through the Bible. Jacob at Bethel saw the angels to up and down a ladder. Joseph saw the vision or dream of the moon and the stars. God will often use dreams to communicate warnings and other important information to us in order to avoid as much interference from our senses as possible.

## **7. Open Visions**

This is where the eyes are open and one sees spiritual things as if they appeared to the natural eyes. It is possible for the open vision to be so real to our eyes that it is only later understood that it was an open vision at all. It is likewise possible to actually be involved in the physical sense in a spiritual phenomenon only to realize later that it was not a vision. This happened to Peter in Acts 12:11

## **8. Trances**

This manifestation is distinct from visions because in a vision; one is still aware of one's surroundings. In a trance one's surroundings are blotted out temporarily, unless God wants them to be observed. This also occurred to Peter in Acts 10.

## **9. Audible Voices**

Acts 9 is the account of Paul's encounter with the Lord while traveling to Damascus. He knocked to the ground and a conversation occurred between he and the Lord. In verse 7 it says the other men stood by and heard a voice but they did not see anyone. To Paul it was an audible voice. In my experience, the audible voice of God will always be life changing no matter the length or brevity of the conversation.

## **10. Visitations from angels**

Angels can bring us information. An angel came to Daniel to bring him understanding. Angels came to Abraham because there was something important that needed to happen that he needed to be informed about. Mary spoke with the angel Gabriel, the same archangel who communicated to Daniel. Joseph was ministered by an angel through a dream, as was Jacob.

## **11. Visitations from the Lord**

At times there may be a commissioning that the Lord Jesus Himself will administer. It is often difficult for the person to communicate what happened in human words. It may not be something they want people to know about, especially since many people would not believe it.

## **12. Translation in place or time**

Both Paul and John were caught up into the third heaven. They were used to doing service for the Body of Christ, to bringing the Word of God so that the Body would prosper, so that they could adjust and prepare for the things that are ahead.

Lloyd C. Phillips - Prophets, Seers and Rulers  
[www.keepersfhisgates.com/seers.htm](http://www.keepersfhisgates.com/seers.htm))

There are a number of good books on hearing God.

Jack Deers – Surprised by the Voice of God 1996  
Clifford Hill – Prophecy Past and Present 1989.

The ministry of the prophet required spending time in the presence of God. Jeremiah calls this standing ‘in the council of the LORD  
Jeremiah calls this standing ‘in the council of the Lord to see or hear his word (Jer 23:18).

It is to that end that all of the prophets training proceeds. He must learn how to hear God speaking in visions and dreams. He must polish his gifts of perception and

knowledge by practice. He must learn to combine bold forthrightness and reticent courtesy. He must know the law – and when and how to follow the Spirit beyond the letter of the law in mercy. He will above all learn the power and ways of intercession and how to call the body to it (John and Paula Sanford - The Elijah Task p. 64).

A prophet will never initiate a single thing for himself. He must be explicitly and totally led by God in every syllable that he utters (Art Katz – The Heart of a Prophet).

This statement of Jeremiah neatly sums up the way in which all the prophets received divine guidance. They learned to listen to God, to meditate upon his word, to allow their thoughts to be directed by the spirit of God and sometimes to receive pictures through which he communicated a message to them (Clifford Hill – Prophecy, Past and Present, p 35).

The prophetic ministry involves seeing things as they really are (Ian Breward)

Prophets should not only be careful how they hear the Lord: they also need to learn that people's wishes can affect their hearing. (John and Paula Sanford – The Elijah Task p.97).

We will only have true prophetic vision to the degree that we are looking through his eyes (Rick Joyner - The Prophetic Ministry).

## **Wait**

When we have received a word from the Lord, the first thing we should do is ask what he wants us to do with it. We should not assume that he wants us to speak it out. He may want us to sit on it and wait and pray. We should also ask for an interpretation and guidance for how to deliver it. Many true words are spoiled, because they are incorrectly handled.

In Charismatic and Pentecostal circles there is an emphasis on spontaneity and giving the word as soon as it is received. Sometimes it would be better to just receive the word and brood on it. God will often clarify and focus the word as the prophet carries the burden. There is a risk that the prophet will add to the word. However, this is no greater than the risk that a person giving a spontaneous prophecy that is not complete, will complete it themselves.

Under no circumstances should we share this revelatory word with our friends or cronies. We must go to God, then the leadership. It may sound good or seem attractive to share this with our closest loved ones. However, in my experience, in 90% of those cases, a disaster occurs. We cannot always know what is in the heart of our friends or what resentments, hurts or opinions lurk beneath the surface. Many

prophetic people get suckered into firing other peoples' bullets, often at the wrong target! (Graham Cooke – Developing Your Prophetic Gifting p 373).

A prophetic minister must discipline himself to remain silent when God is silent (Mike Bickle – Growing in the Prophetic p. 105).

When frustration is present in the life of an individual, they will probably see and hear correctly but interpret it in a totally wrong way (Graham Cooke – Developing Your Prophetic Gifting p. 322).

A Prophet loves to hear from God, but sometimes the message received can be painful to bear.

Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me once more: “Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land.” So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, “Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but in your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.” I took the little scroll from the angel’s hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. Then I was told “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages and kings” (Rev 10:8-11)

Once the prophet has received revelation, he must enter into intercession

# Delivering the word

When God gives a prophetic word, he also gives instructions about how it should be delivered. Prophets must make sure that they get his instructions and act on them. A word that is delivered in an incorrect way is nullified, and effectively becomes a false prophecy.

So a prophet needs to know more than what to say. He needs also to discover how God wants to him to say it (John and Paula Sanford - The Elijah Task p. 90)

Many times the biggest challenge for prophets is not necessarily in hearing the voice of God, but in learning how to minister the word in wisdom. This speaks of the timing, the manner, the place, the wording, the intent, the context and the attitude of hear when ministering figures (Tom Hamon – The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation).

## Prophetic Methods

A word can be delivered in a variety of ways. We must be open to all the creativity of God in the delivery of his word. These are some of the methods that God uses:

### 1. Speaking

The most common method for delivering a prophecy is for the prophet to speak directly to the recipients (s). God is a god who speaks. He will give instruction about the right time and the right place to speak. Getting the time and place right is really important.

### 2. Talking

Sometimes a word may be quietly spoken to the person receiving it.

I never cease to be amazed at the number of persons who tell me that God spoke through me, giving them specific directions for their lives of great encouragement in the midst of personal tribulation. When I reflect on our time together, I remember only table conversation, but they recall prophetic truth. I had shared what I felt at the moment but they had heard the voice of God in that communication. Since I was but the channel – not the source of the communication, I didn't share their awareness of God's involvement Advancing in the Prophetic.,

### 3. Proxy

God may get another person to speak out the prophecy. When Jeremiah was in prison he would write the word down and Baruch would read it to the recipient.

#### **4. Preaching**

A message from God may sometime be given in a sermon. Some of the most prophetic words that I have heard were delivered as sermons.

#### **5. Writing**

A word can be written down and delivered to the recipients. Isaiah and Jeremiah were writing prophets. The scriptures promise a blessing for those who read prophecy.

Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near (Rev 1:3)

#### **6. Parables**

Nathan told a story to get his message across to King David. He probably would not have received a direct work from Nathan.

The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, “There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. “Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.” David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that Lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.” Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! (2 Sam 12:1-7).

#### **7. Prophetic Action**

Sometimes God asks a prophet to take an action that will illustrate the word being brought. The prophet becomes a living parable or visual aid. For example, Ezekiel lay on his side tied up with ropes for many days as a warning of the exile to Babylon (Ezek 4). Jeremiah bought a piece of land to bring home a prophetic message (Jer 32:1-9). Isaiah walked naked in the street to demonstrate the shame of Israel (Is 20).

The key people sometimes become actors in a living parable.

By the word of the Lord one of the sons of the prophets said to his companion, “Strike me with your weapon,” but the man refused. So the prophet said, “Because you have not obeyed the Lord, as soon as you leave me a lion will kill you.” And after the man went away, a lion found him and killed him. The prophet found another man and said, “Strike me, please.” So the man struck him and wounded him. Then the prophet went and stood by the road waiting for the king. He disguised himself with his headband down over his eyes. As the king passed by, the prophet called out to him, “Your servant went into the thick of the battle, and someone came to me with a captive and said, “Guard this man. If he is missing, it will be your life for his life, or you must pay a talent of silver, ‘While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared’ That is your sentence,” the king of Israel said “You have pronounced it yourself.” Then the prophet quickly removed the headband from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. He said to the king, “This is what the Lord says: ‘You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore it is your life for his life, your people for his people’” ( 1 kings 20:35-42).

## **8. Sealing the Word**

Sometimes a word must be sealed up for delivery at a later time. Daniel was told to seal up some of his words for the future.

He replied, “ Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end (Dan 12 :9)

For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it lingers, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay (Hab 2:3,4).

We should not assume that because we have been given a word that we have permission to share it. We must ask what he wants us to do.

Even if we hear right (and I think that most of the time we do hear right) we can still destroy the effect of the word by wrong delivery – wrong wording or wrong timing. If we get the timing and wording wrong then the prophecy does not have the effect for which it was intended. If it doesn't have the right effect then it is not the word of the Lord. So – a word is only “right” when all three come together (<http://www.africaprophecy.co.za/2prophets.htm>).

The seer gathers experience, not like those with ears itching, not like those who never care to draw conclusions and never learn. Prophets are old men, experienced men, men who have taken time and opportunity to unveil and unmask the glittery and sensual moves and modes of the world without and within

the Church. The seer has learnt to stay silent until the proper work of defining and labeling is finished. Prophets wait until they have received a word from the Lord, and they keep on waiting for proper timing (Lars Widerberg – The Seer).

Getting the delivery instructions right is just as important as getting the word right.

It is a good thing not to get locked into one methodology. Try to have a variety of ways to deliver prophetic words; God is full of infinite variety (Graham Cooke – Developing Your Prophetic Gifting 0.83)

How do we discharge the burden of the Lord? After we have received revelation, and made intercession, we will know the best course. Sometimes we will find release through writing, such as Isaiah. On other occasions we may compose a song, as David. Or we may write poems and verse, as Jeremiah. We may act out the word dramatically, as Ezekiel, or we may thunderously speak the word as Moses, Elijah, or John the Baptist. We may speak in parables as the Lord Jesus. The tools, methods, and ways are different, but the underlying principle is the same. God will give different expression to the proclamation of the word, and He will be pleased to use the prophets differently in accordance with their unique gifts and personalities (Chip Brogden – The Ministry of the Watchman).

The prophets of the Old Testament sometimes did weird things like wearing ox yokes (Jer 27,28), but these were by the command of the Lord to startle the conscience of the people. Old Testament prophets were men of discipline, wisdom and counsel and insight, not of wild ecstasy (Sanfords).

“For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?” (1 Corinthians 14:8) When you can produce a distinct sound, the church will hear you (Rick Joyner - The Prophetic Ministry).

We desperately need oracles from God who can say what this hour means, and what we are tending to, and what God is requiring in the light of the things that point to the consummation of the age. We need men who can communicate the word. If a prophet is not distinguished by his speaking, then do not look for his credentials on the basis of his gifting or his miracles or his gift of knowledge (Art Katz – The Prophetic Church).

The prophets always came forward openly and spoke in the name of the Lord. They did not engage in subterfuge, but evidenced a holy boldness. They believed that God had spoken to them, and consequently, they delivered his words fearlessly. Whatever else may be said about the prophets of Israel, they were men of conviction and they boldly expressed their convictions (Edward J Young – My servants the Prophets p.15).

The prophet stood before men as a man who had been to stand before God (J A Motyer - Prophets and Prophecy).

On the other side, while there are occasions when the prophet must rebuke sharply, we are often guilty of shooting canaries with shotguns (John and Paula Sanford - The Elijah Task p.95).

Jeremiah wept much and yet wished he could weep more, that he might affect a stupid people and rouse them to due sense of the hand of God gone out against them. It becomes us while we are here in this vase of tears (Matthew Henry).

There is no prophecy, which is not linked with tears, for the future is nearly always heavy with nameless terror (Nigg).

### **Power of the Spirit**

A prophetic word must be spoken in the power of the Spirit. A word that is not anointed by the Holy Spirit will fall flat and will be wasted even if it is true.

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. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy (Acts 2:17,18).

This anointing will come from lives who have endured the test of their calling. And they yet STAND! (Undrai Fizer Substance: The Anointing to Stand and Endure).

### **Speak Boldly**

A prophet should also speak boldly. He should avoid the temptation to soften God's word. He must make certain it is heard clearly.

The prophets were men of the market place rather than the study. Indeed prophecy throughout the History of Israel was always oral; it was the declared word of God. The prophets were not men who composed carefully considered theological dissertations. The words that came from them were white hot. They were the words of God into the contemporary situation (Clifford Hill – Prophecy, Past and Present p.24).

The most important impartation you should receive in your journey of destiny is not just an ability to speak or preach. The most powerful thing you will have received is an ability to stand. Anyone can speak, but everyone cannot stand. All of the blows, “Spiritual rapids” and mazes you have gone through (because of your purpose and

destiny) should have built within your soul a certain, prophetic resilience and foundation, one that will be the impartor of anointing into others.

Anyone can speak, and speak well. But it will take more than speaking well to ignite the life-altering dreams in others. It will take prophetic substance (a God developed foundation of understanding and true settling in the will and purposes of God. It is a foundation that was built by fire, rejection, and pain). You must have substance. You impart from substance. Some individuals crave an impartation of the “external gifts” or the “obvious flow “. But the anointing is birthed and released from a deep well, dug deeply in the trenches of a soul that has been connected to God’s appointed destiny for life. This process transcends a traditional, religious experience.

Prophetic substance brings maturity. You can ask for wisdom, but maturity is something you must arrive at. Substance runs deep very deep. It is the root of anointing that is embedded within you. It is where the river flows from. It is where the revelation and the power comes from. It is the resting place of the Holy Ghost that resides within you. This anointing keeps you from being “tossed about” in unbelief, faithlessness, and spiritual confusion. It causes you to become “full grown” in the experience of the Spirit.

But the servant of God should never threaten (1 Pet. 2:23). A true prophet must stand mute and meek before the will of another. He must never force another to do his own will (John and Paula Sanford – The Elijah Task).

The mature prophet, as we said before, mute and meek before the will of the other person, and he is silent observer of what God does. It is God who acts. To be a watchman or a witness is to see what God is doing (John and Paula Sanford – The Elijah Task).

Those who have messages from God must not be afraid of the faces of men (Matthew Henry).

A prophet should speak simply and clearly. There is no benefit in using King James English.

The best speakers for God are frequently they who are least gifted with human eloquence; for if that be richly present the mighty power of moving men—there is an imminent peril of relying on it., and attributing the results to its magnetic spell. God cannot give his glory to another. He may not share this praise with man (F.B. Meyer – Jeremiah p.12).

True prophets leave nothing to speculation, as their speech is precise and sometimes very blunt. Prophets of integrity do not concern themselves with what people think, and they are willing to die for what they speak (Kingsley A. Fletcher – The True Prophet in the Local Church).

## **Right Attitude**

A Prophecy must be delivered in the right attitude. We must speak the truth in love. An incorrect attitude nullifies the truth of the word. Many true prophecies have been made false, because they have been spoken in a harsh or critical attitude.

We can be absolutely correct in the heart of a word and still release it at the wrong time or in a form that the receiver can not accept. I know of several prophets who found themselves in very hot water – not because the word was wrong but because the delivery broke the rules  
(<http://www.africaprophecy.co.za/2prophets.htm>).

A man can present truth so arrogantly that men will not listen. That man's truth has failed to find expression in our Lords way; therefore, however factually true it may have been, it has failed to become truth to his fellow men (John and Paula Sanford – The Elijah Task).

When you can produce a distinct sound, the church will hear you (Rick Joyner – The Ministry of a Watchman).

God is showing me that we are missing out on a lot of Truth because we become offended in the messenger or the method of delivery. If something is true, let us weigh it, test it, and discern it on its own merit (Chip Brogden – Overcoming Prophetic Offence)

All prophets should not God's response, when he saw the sins of the people who lived during the time of Noah.

The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain (Gen 6:6).

God's heart was "filled with pain". A prophet cannot represent God during a time of judgement unless his heart is filled with pain. A person who enjoys speaking judgement cannot speak for God. Only a prophet speaking with a broken heart can speak for God.

## **Courtesy**

If a prophecy is for a church, the prophet should find out who God wants it delivered to. Delivering the word to the congregation is wrong, if God intends it to be delivered to the elders and Pastor. Prophets should be courteous and abide by the protocols that prevail in a particular church.

If you are a Christian first you will remember that you should walk softly, with meekness and humility, while esteeming others as better than yourself. Then the prophetic word, when and if it comes, will be seasoned with the appropriate amount

of mercy and grace. Remember that without love you will inevitably become as sounding brass – all judgement. If we cannot or will not stay in love, God will set out to humble us shamefully before our brothers and sisters that we may know the depths of our hypocrisy and self-righteousness. That is evidence of his great love for all of us (Chip Brogden – Letter to a Reluctant Prophet).

Prophetic offence is when you say what God tells you to say and people get around it by finding fault with either the message or the one bringing the message. Acting like a jerk or coming to people with the attitude that you're going to "rattle their cage" is not prophetic offence, it's just plain being offensive. Such "shock prophets" are high on boldness but typically low on content, which is why they have to resort to such crude methods to get attention (Chip Brogden – Overcoming Prophetic Offence).

I have observed that when Truth arrives on the scene, people either embrace it, run from it, or attack it (Chip Brogden – Overcoming Prophetic Offence).

Perceptions about the one who brings the word inevitably has a bearing on the attitude to the word. Prophetic people resent this – but it is the truth. We are told to judge people by their fruits – and the church takes that very seriously. They are excellent fruit inspectors – and in their eyes those that can't produce what they are looking for don't have to be listened to.

Are you a prophet in their eyes? You may have prophetic anointing – you could (in God's processes) become absolutely anything – but do they see you as being there now? If not there are very distinct limits to what they will accept from you – and you need to observe those limits carefully.

Churches have criteria for prophets – and they are very high! They look for stunning revelations that have come to pass and really changed the course of events; they expect signs, wonders, miracles or healings that, endorse your spiritual authority.

Because this is so, we all need to build relationship and credibility that will be the foundation for the acceptance of the word of the Lord when we speak on His behalf. That takes time. It takes risk. It costs. It takes effort. Many prophetic people are so caught up with introspection that they don't take time to serve others and develop good relationships – sometimes not even in their own homes! As a result their word is most unlikely to be accepted in their local church. If it is not accepted there it is highly unlikely that it will be accepted anywhere for long.

Building relationships does not guarantee that your word will be respected. It only gives it a chance of being accepted. But without relationships there is no change it will be accepted (African Prophecy (<http://www/africaprophecy.co.za/2prophetc.htm>)).

**Truth without love is no truth**

## **The Word belongs to God**

Once the word is delivered, the prophet's task is finished; apart from prayer. Prophets must leave the results to God. A prophet, who nags in support of a word, quickly loses credibility and detracts from the Word. God does not nag. Deliver the word in the right way in the right attitude and God will do the rest.

God is looking for messengers. It is not our job to make people listen. It is just our job to deliver the message, with a right spirit. The prophetic should be a practical part of your everyday lives. It should be used to effect and strengthen the Kingdom (Ed Traut).

Brethren, if we will do God's work in God's way at God's time with God's power, we shall have God's blessings and the devil's curses (Leonard Ravenhill – Why Revival Tarries).

A prophet must be careful to keep the word pure. They must avoid the temptation to add or to improve God's words. Frequently people who prophesy will mix their own thoughts in with the word of the Lord in such a way that God's word is altered or distorted. This happens especially when people are just beginning to exercise the prophetic gift. In one sense, something of our own thought always appears in the prophecies we give, because prophecy operates through us. But when our thoughts add to the word of the Lord, or take something away from it, or distort its meaning, the value of our prophecy is greatly diminished. We cannot rely upon impure prophecy as the Lord's word (Bruce Yocum – Prophecy).

We must also be careful about speaking too much.

Frankly, we talk too much. As long as we are talking, we cannot hear. We cannot both hear and talk at the same time. There needs to be more hearing, and less talking if the prophetic babel is to come into order out of chaos....Yes, we must speak. But when and how we speak is of great importance. Churning out "red hot" revelations and splatting them on the web is not the way to go. We must speak targetedly and in season. We must speak only as we can do so without losing our internal anchor in the One who leads us beside still waters. And once we speak, we must immediately return to our place of waiting and abiding in Him .....James said it well, 'Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak', remembering that, as John reported, the Lord "spoke" only as He "heard". So it should be with us (Anderson C: But I Would Have You Undistracted).

## **God's Word is Powerful and Effective**

The word that comes from God will be effective.

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil? (Num 23:19). How can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce those whom the Lord has not denounced? (Num. 23:8).

God will sometimes confirm his word with signs and wonders. Both Elijah and Elisha had their authority confirmed by signs and wonders.

Elisha returned to Gilgal and there was a famine in that region. While the company of the prophets was meeting with him, he said to his servant, “Put on the large pot and cook some stew for these men.” One of them went out into the fields to gather herbs and found a wild vine. He gathered some of its gourds and filled the fold of his cloak. When he returned, he cut them up into the pot of stew, though no one knew what they were. The stew was poured out for the men, but as they began to eat it, they cried out, “O man of God, there is death in the pot!” And they could not eat it. Elisha said, “Get some flour.” He put it into the pot and said, “Serve it to the people to eat”. And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

A man came from Baal Shallishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. “Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said “How can I set this before a hundred men?” his servant asked. But Elisha answered. “Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the Lord says: ‘They will eat and have some left over’.” “Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord (2 Kings 4:38-44).

## **Testing Prophecies And Prophets**

We should welcome prophecies, but they should always be tested.

Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil (1 Thess 5:19-22)

### **Living with Imperfection**

There are no perfect prophets. There are very few perfect prophecies. I would expect that even experienced prophets get it wrong sometimes. I suspect that most prophets would be very happy, if they got it right 90 percent of the time. An even larger percentage of prophecies from God will be slightly contaminated by something the prophet has added from his own heart. This is normal even for experienced prophets, because all prophets are human.

The solution is not to reject all prophecy, but to test all prophecy. Even if a word comes from a "big name" prophet, we should not assume that it is correct. Christians often feel guilty about rejecting a word, because it came from a well-known prophet. They should remember that prophets with big reputations will still be wrong at times. In fact because there is more pressure on them to prophesy, they will make more frequent mistakes. There is no shame in rejecting their prophecy, if it is tested and found to be incorrect.

There are no perfect prophets. Even the Old Testament prophets got things wrong at time. God allows his prophets to make mistakes to keep them humble and to prevent the church from becoming too dependent on them. We must become more relaxed and comfortable in dealing with impure and incorrect prophecies, so that they can be discarded without drama. As we get better at testing prophecies, we will get better at calmly saying, "That was not from God" or "He missed the bus there", without feeling guilty.

We must also learn to reject prophecies without killing the prophet. The church should accept a mistake as a reminder that all prophets are human. The prophets should be glad to hear about their mistakes, so they can learn from them.

Prophets (must) humbly accept the truth that they see through a glass darkly, that they know only in part. In other words, they make mistakes. Mature prophets urge everyone to who they prophesy to judge, test and compare with scripture everything they say. They are not offended when people are careful. (Pastoring the prophetic).

## Testing prophecies

The Bible gives a number of principles for testing a prophecy.

1. 1 Cor. 14:4 - It must build up the body.
2. 2 Tim 3:16 - It must agree with Scripture.
3. John 16:13,14 - It must exalt Jesus.
4. Deut 13: 1-5 - It must come true.
5. Deut 13: 1-5 - It must lead to God and obedience to him.
6. Rom 8:15 - It must produce liberty
7. 2 Cor 3:6 - It must produce life.
8. 1 John 2:27 - It must be attested to the Holy Spirit in each believer.

All prophecies **should** glorify and honour Jesus.

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev 19:10).

Sometimes it is hard to test a prophecy. A word may seem to be okay, but it may take time before it is fulfilled. Some words of encouragement are consistent with scripture and hard to prove wrong. In these situations, testing of prophets may be more helpful.

## Reliable Prophets

Testing individual prophecies can often be difficult. What every Church needs is a Prophet who has a proven track record, a person who is known for speaking the word of the Lord. It is easier to test prophets than individual prophecies. A prophet can be watched over time to see if his life is bearing fruit for the Lord (Matthew 7: 15-20). Every church needs a proven prophet who can be trusted to bring a reliable word when one is required.

Judge the spirit of the prophecy before you judge the truth of the word.

The restoration of the prophetic ministry was one of the most urgent needs of the modern church. The danger is that in time of need, God’s people will accept second best. We must not accept every person who claims to be a prophet, but test them to discover those that are sent by the Lord. If the church is to release prophets into their full ministry, it must learn to recognize those who are truly called by God.

We need words from heaven. Too many words come from the human heart and not from heaven. God wants prophets who will bring words from heaven that will change things on earth (Terry Collins).

The body of Christ needs to mature until we can distinguish a true prophetic word from merely the word of a prophet.. Many modern Christians are afraid to reject

anything spoken by one who claims to be a prophet or prophetess (Iverna – Tompkins - advancing in the Prophetic).

Jesus warned that false prophets and deceivers would come upon the earth, and that even some of the elect would be deceived by them (Mark 13:22,23). False prophets have been present in the world in every age, but they are particularly common in times of tumult like our present age. We have seen a great outburst of prophetic activity, with all kinds of individuals and cults claiming to have the truth. In this situation the church not only needs prophets who speak God's truth, but must also learn to discern the true from the false. Whenever God releases a particular gift in the world, Satan tries to release a counterfeit of that gift. We can be sure that as God restores the prophetic ministry, Satan will try and raise up false prophets.

There is often a prophetic word in the words of a prophet,  
But not everything said is true prophecy (Advancing in the Prophetic).

The Bible gives a number of tests for discerning true prophets from those who are false. All Christians should become familiar with them.

## 1. **Calling**

Every true prophet is called by God. The initiative in the making of a prophet always rests with him. It is not a ministry that anyone can take up. A true prophetic ministry always begins with a call from God (Jer 1:4-10; Is 6:1-8) Jeremiah condemned the false prophets because they had not stood in the presence of the Lord to hear his voice. They could not speak his word because they had not heard him speak (Jer 23:18,22) The true prophetic ministry always begins with the call of God.

There is the prophetic ministry of promise born of the will of the Father and there is the prophetic ministry born of flesh and the will of man. Though both are conceived through a genuine desire to fulfil God's plan and promise, the one birthed by flesh must be maintained by flesh while the one birthed by the Spirit will be sustained by the Spirit. Flesh reproduces flesh and therefore speaks directly to the desires of man. Spirit reproduces spirit and therefore speaks directly to the desires of man. Spirit reproduces spirit and therefore speaks forth the desire of God (John Bevere Thus saith the Lord p.4.)

The first sign that a person has been called to be a prophet, is a continuous experience of the gift of prophecy. Most prophets will begin by sharing a word of prophecy in fellowship meetings. Eventually this will change from an occasional experience into a regular occurrence. When a person regularly brings a clear and true prophetic word to the meeting, it may be a sign that God is calling him to be a prophet. Of course, we must guard against those who draw attention to themselves, by speaking at every meeting. Their lack of fruit will make them obvious

## 2 **Fulfilled Words**

An important statement about testing prophets is made in Deuteronomy 18:2.

If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously.

It is presumptuous to speak in the Lord's name if he has not spoken. If the word of a prophet is not fulfilled, then he is a false prophet. This test must be used with care. Sometimes a word is not fulfilled, because the people repent or God shows mercy and postpones judgement. The test applies more to positive prophecies.

Prophets often foretold destruction and sometimes the destruction did not come, yet this did not disprove their divine mission, as in the case of Jonah. For God is gracious, and ready to turn away his wrath from those who turn away from their sins. But the prophet who prophesied peace and prosperity absolutely and unconditionally without adding the necessary proviso, that they do not by willful sin put a bar in their own door and stop the coming of God's favours, will be provided a true prophet only by the accomplishment of his prediction (Matthew Henry).

There is some prophecy, however, that is unconditional. It depends solely on God himself for fulfillment. Normally it relates to the overview of his plans and purposes for mankind as a whole.

The proof that a prophet has been called is the fact that his words are effective and fulfilled. A good example of this was Samuel.

The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet. 1 Sam 3:19,20.

The fact that his words were fulfilled showed that God was with him and was proof of his call.

A prophet's calling will be recognized by the church. Samuel did not have to make claims for himself. All Israel recognized his calling, and accepted his ministry. A true prophet will be recognized by other Christians.

## 3. **False Gods**

A prophet who encourages people to worship false gods is not a true prophet. Even if he performs signs and wonders he is not to be followed. Such a person is a false prophet. A true prophet will always be faithful to Jesus and zealous for His glory.

If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces for you a miraculous sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods,"..... you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul (Deut 13:1 – 3).

Jesus is the one who inspires and fulfils all prophecy (Rev 19:10). All prophecy should be centred on him.

Prophecy will confirm and broaden the vision; it cannot create one if nothing is there. Vision is created through prayer, seeking God and sharing our hearts with people in the work. If these things are absent we need to be restoring people of God, not creating vision for empty hearts (Graham Cooks – Developing Your Prophetic Gifting p.80).

#### 4. **Character**

Character is one of the best tests of a prophet. Jesus said,

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Matt 2:15,15.

He went on to say that a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. If a person is not living a holy life he should not be acknowledged as a prophet. A true prophet will be demonstrating the fruit of the spirit.

People who continue in blatant sin whilst exercising spiritual gifts create this ever widening gulf in their personality which results in spiritual failure, emotional collapse, sometimes mental breakdown, physical illness, relational difficulties and quite often a complete moral lapse (Graham Cooke – Developing Your Prophetic Gifting p 103).

It is easier for the leaders to reject the prophecy and the prophet, particularly if there are some unresolved character issues in the life of the prophet. It provides a legitimate reason to reject the word in the eyes of the people, though not necessarily in the eyes of the Lord. Prophecy has a way of testing our true motives (Graham Cooke - Developing Your Prophetic Gifting p. 297).

#### 5. **Theology**

When John was writing about discerning truth from error, he said that a true spirit will acknowledge that Jesus has come in the flesh (1 John 4:2) This is a theological test. A true prophet will have a correct understanding of the truth about Jesus. People who teach strange things about the nature of Jesus are false prophets.

One of the most important things to do in a church that wants to nurture and administrate prophetic ministry is to dial down the mysticism and the carnal desire to look superspiritual. We need to keep our eyes off people and remain focused on Jesus and His purpose for us (Mike Bickie – Growing in the Prophetic p. 57).

Prophets do not bring new truth. Revelations is simply a revealing of what is already true and bringing it to bear upon our heart and soul. Revelation is based upon insight into the written Word of God, not into visions and dreams and prophecies. These other things are simply tools for expressing the Word, they are not the Word; no more than the water hose is water, it simply delivers the water (Chip Brogden - The Ministry of the Watchman).

## **6. Discernment**

In every fellowship there should be people who have experienced the gift of discernment. They should be able to discern the false prophet from true prophet. An example of this is found in Acts 15:16-18.

Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the Spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

A slave girl kept calling Paul and Silas servants of the most high God. She was able to predict the future. She was also acknowledging God, so in a sense she fulfilled both the conditions given in Deuteronomy. However Paul became troubled, and discerned in his spirit that she had a spirit of divination. He cast the spirit out and she lost her fortune-telling powers. In the coming days, God will raise up true prophets, but there will also be many false prophets around. The church must learn to discern the true from the false.

## **Warning**

While it is important to test prophecies, we must have the right attitude. Refusing to accept God’s word, mocking a prophet or scoffing at a prophecy can be dangerous.

Now the king had put the officer on whose arm he leaned in charge of the gate, and the people trampled him in the gateway, and he died, just as the man of God had foretold when the king came down to his house. It happened as the man of God had said to the king: “About this time tomorrow, a seah of flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria.” The officer had said to the man of God, “Look, even if the Lord should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?” The man of God had

replied, “You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of it!” And that is exactly what happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gateway, and he died (2 Kings 7:17-20).

But Elisha said to him, “Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money, or to accept clothes, olive groves, vineyards, flocks, herds, or menservants and maidservants? Naaman’s leprosy will cling to you and to your descendents forever.” Then Gehazi went from Elisha’s presence and he was leprous, as white as snow (2 Kings 5:26–27).

Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and all the people: “The Lord sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the things you have heard. Now reform your ways and your actions and obey the Lord your God. Then the Lord will relent and not bring the disaster he has pronounced against you. As for me, I am in your hands; do with me whatever you thing is good and right. Be assured, however, that if you put me to death, you will bring the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on those who live in it, for in truth the Lord has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing” (Jer 26:12-15).

## **The words of the lord**

### **Prophet Belfield Belgrave Jan 4, 1990**

Even now am I among you, my people I am the same God that brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. Did I not deliver them with a strong hand? Did I not deliver them with a mighty hand? I am the same God that brought my people over the river Jordan. Yea my people we stand at river Jordan, but we shall cross over Yea, my children, prepare for war. For even now the enemy, the enemy of our souls is even preparing for battle against us. Yea my children, be strong. Even now, many souls are cast down, but hope thou in God. Like the psalmist David said, O soil, why are thou cast down within me? Hope thou in God. Yea my children, I am the same God and I change not. If you will trust me and obey me, I will work great signs and great wonders among you in this year. My children, be strong. Fear not, be courageous, saith the Lord God Almighty.

PRAISE THE LORD

### **The words of the Lord Jan 1, 1990**

As I was with David because he refused to eat from the King's table. Yea saith the Lord God tonight, if thou will refuse to eat of the world, if thou will refuse to eat from their idols, I the Lord God will raise you up as I raised up Daniel. As I was with Moses, as Moses stood up for me that he would not be called the son of Pharaoh. As I was with Moses, so will I be with you. There will not be any Red Sea that will be too hard for you. For I am the God that conquered the Red Sea. I am the God that commanded the sea to be still, Though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you shall fear no evil, for I the Lord God will be with you. For many of you will go through the valley of the shadow of death. Know that death will compass you. But in that hour, in that time, in that moment, thou shall remember my word with you. I will be with you. I will be your rod, I will be your staff. In the time of trouble, you may not have a brother, you may not have a sister, but I the Lord God is with you. There shall be no valley that you should not be able to overcome. There shall be no mountain that you should not be able to climb because I have called and you have answered me. I have spoken and you have heard. Though you go through much darkness, though the enemy anoint your head with oil, though they will try to shame you, yea, your cup runneth over. Surely, I will lead you through the path of righteousness. If you will dwell in me and I dwell in you, you shall ask anything and I will give it to you. My children, remember my words unto you that I have spoken through my servants, through my prophets, through my prophetesses. Rehearse the words in your ears that in the time of need, you will know that I am that I am. There will be no Egypt that you will go in that you will not conquer. As I brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, so will I bring my people. Even now my people that are scattered throughout the world are caught in Egypt. But I the Lord God will send a revival throughout the Caribbean that will bring my people from bondage because it was too long that my people were in bondage. It was too long that my people were in chains. I the Lord God will send deliverance. But before deliverance

comes, I the Lord God will move in my fury. I will move in my wrath because many of my people have forsaken me. Many of my people have gone after the world, many of my people have gone after the material things, many of my people have gone after the idols. They worship me with their lips but their hearts are far from me, saith the Lord (STL). Many come into my sanctuary on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays and they worship me with their mouths. Their hearts are far from me because they still seek after malice, they still seek after strife, they still seek after confusion. But I will raise you up as I spoke through my prophet Joel. I said in my word - That I will raise up an army that will leap over the walls., I will raise up an army that will not bow, though the guns be at their heads, though the spears will be at their sides, though the swords will be there to cut off their heads, they will stand for me. Though they will have to fight against witchcraft, though they will have to fight against voodoo, though they will have to fight against the unseen power of the enemy, my people will go forth, STL Be Strong and mighty.

My children, hear the word of the Lord for 1990 for I am the Lord God, I am a jealous God. For I the Lord God will take all the praise, I will take all the worship. For my praise will not return with another, for my praise will come unto me, STL. I will visit my people in 1990. You will hear about great pastors, you will hear about great shepherds you will hear about great evangelists. You will hear like never before of great men. They worship me with their mouths. But I will pass through with my judgement. I will pass through the churches of Barbados. I will pass through the churches of Trinidad. I will pass through the churches of St. Lucia. I will pass through the churches of St. Vincent. I will pass through the churches of Guyana. I will pass through the churches, saith the Lord of Antigua. I will pass through the churches in Anguilla because many of my people have gone back. They have backslidden from me. They are like backslidden Israel. They are backslidden. Judgement begins at the house of the Lord and if it first begin at us, where will the sinners and the ungodly appear. My judgement, my wrath, my anger -- I will not spare STL. I will raise up shepherds, I will raise up pastors that will lead my people. For I will visit many of the churches. As I visit in my judgement, so will I visit in revival. You will hear about revival that you never heard about before, STL. I will send you to revivals that I have never sent you to before, STL. I will move as I moved among the apostles, STL. There shall be signs, there shall be wonders that will be performed through my handmaidens, through prophets through my apostles, through my teachers, STL. Gear yourself, prepare yourselves for war. For there shall be war throughout the land, throughout the Caribbean. It will not be a war with guns nor with knives nor with swords, but it will be a war in the spirit world. It will be a war like in the time of Daniel. Many people in this 1990 will come and tell you that they are not able to pray. They will say that their prayers are not going anywhere, that their prayers are not answered. You shall tell my people that they shall prepare themselves for war, as Daniel prepared himself in prayer and fasting. And though the enemy comes like a flood to hold back the prayers, I sent my angel Gabriel to loose his prayers, to loose the answer. If you will remember, if you will hear my voice, the name of Jesus will loose your prayers. The name of Jesus will break the King of Persia, it will melt the King of Persia, STL. For my name is all-powerful. For my name was given to me, for my name shall be called Jesus for I shall save my people from their sins, STL. If you will use my name as

Moses used the rod. Your rod tonight is in your mouth, SPEAK IT. The name of Jesus is your rod, STL.

For I will visit the nation of France, STL. I will visit the nation of France. I will visit France. I am calling on the nation of France, for destruction is at your door, STL.

I will visit the nation of China one more time, STL. You will hear about great destruction like you never heard before. I will visit China with my wrath, with my anger, with my fury. I will visit with thunder, rain, lightning and earthquakes, with tidal waves, with storms, STL. China, prepare for trouble. Many will weep for China.

I will visit Haiti one more time in famine. Out of the famine will come revival, STL. My people in Haiti, it is time for revival. Many worship the idols, many worship witchcraft and voodoo. Haiti, this is why I will visit you with great famine. This year will be a great famine for Haiti, STL.

I will visit the land of Syria. I will visit the land of Egypt. I will visit Jordan. I will visit the Far East, STL. For I the Lord God hath spoken it. I will visit Iran and Iraq.

I will visit the European nations. When they say – peace, peace, suddenly destruction will come their way as a woman with child. She was not expecting to go into labour, she was not expecting to go into travail. So will I visit the nations of Europe, STL.

My children, open your eyes. Open your ears and hear what I say unto you. The way is paved in Europe for the antichrist. The sign that you see – the Berlin wall -, the sign that you see in Poland, the sign that you see in Romania, the sign that you see in Germany.

My people, don't take lightly the issue of Panama. Oh Panama My children, what is going on in Panama – eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, neither is it entered into the heart of man. It is more than war, it is more than trouble, STL.

I will visit the nation of Cuba. I will remove Castro. For I will visit the President of Russia, I will visit the President of Cuba. I will visit the President of America, STL. As I visited Nebuchadnezzar, so will I visit them because they refuse to acknowledge that I am the great I am. For they acknowledge their weapons, they acknowledge their world power. As I brought down Nebuchadnezzar, so will I bring them down. Because America doth not fear my name, I will bring it down to the ground, STL. For I will visit the City of Alabama, STL. For there will be great trouble in Alabama. I will visit the state of Washington and there will be great destruction, even earthquakes, even tornadoes. I will rock California, STL. I will rock the nation of America and I will visit the states. I will visit the states of Washington, California and Texas with great tornadoes and great storms, STL.

I will visit the City of Manhattan. I will shake the City of New York. I will visit San Francisco one more time, STL. Their temperatures shall go beyond that which it never went before.

I will visit the nation of South Africa. I will shake the nation of South Africa and they will know that I am the Lord.

Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla, St. Lucia, Trinidad, Barbados, Montserrat, Martinique, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Jamaica ----- Don't build back the cities, don't build back the towns, don't build back the houses but thou shalt fear my name. Because thou hast not taken my warning, I shall visit you with greater storms, with greater hurricanes, STL.

Even the land of Barbados. There is a plot that has been set. You will hear about more crime in 1990 for the spirit of crime is in your land. The demon of crime is in your land, Justice doth cry out. Much blood shall run in the houses through crime. Many will lose their lives through crime because the demon of crime is in your land. You will hear of accidents like you never heard before. You will read about accidents like you never heard before. . You will read about accidents and see accidents over the T.V., in our media like never before. For bodies shall be shoveled from the streets. There will be major collisions on the highways, like on the street of Trinidad, where vehicles will be cut in half, STL, because I will visit, I will visit with my anger and my wrath. The spirit of suicide is in your land. Many will die by the demon of suicide. If you don't pray for your family, even your family will die by the demon of accidents. The demon of crime will take over your homes and your family. Your land is full of robbery, your land is become a den of thieves. Your land is become a land of idolatry, adultery, fornication, witchcraft, voodoo and idol worship. As I was vex with my people Israel because they went after other gods and committed spiritual adultery, so will I visit your land. Bloodshed is in your land. Your streets and your houses will be filled with blood. For I the Lord God will go forth with my people. Though the sea be removed unto you, it will not harm you. As America went to Panama, so their ships are spying out your land. They will come from the North. Your land is turned over to the hands of the heathens because my people refuse to pray. If my people that are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sins and I will heal their lands. But my people refuse to obey my voice, my people refuse to hear my voice, my people refuse to be ruled by me. I reached out my hands to a hard hearted people, I reached out my hands to a stiff-necked people. My people, warn my people for me, STL, warn my people, warn my people, warn my people because if you don't warn my people, I will require the blood upon your shoulders. For the sword is over my people, the sword is over my people. Go through the streets and see if you will find, go through the church and see if you will find the ones that stand up for righteousness anymore. I will visit your nation - I will visit man, I will visit beast. Many of your stocks will die with diseases. You will hear about disease among the animals as you have never heard before. O Barbados, O my people in Barbados. I have gathered you as a hen gathered her chicks. I gathered you under my wings but you refuse to be gathered. I have gathered the Nation of Barbados as I gathered Jerusalem but you refuse, you refuse, your refuse. Even your youth refuse to hear anything about me, even your adults refuse to hear anything about me and your land is left desolate. There will be political violence in your land. Your land is polluted. Many of your altars are polluted. My children, you shall not worship me at the polluted altars, but you shall worship me in spirit

and in truth, STL. For I have raised you up in the land of Barbados as I raised up the apostles.

I will visit the nation of Singapore.

I will visit the nation of New Zealand. Woe unto New Zealand. Woe unto New Zealand.

I will visit the nation of Peru. Woe unto Peru. Woe unto Peru.

I will visit the nation of Libya.

I will visit Pakistan. I will shake Pakistan

There will be a plane crash off the Caribbean. This will be a sign. Many planes will go down throughout the World. Many lives will be lost.

I will do great wonders as I did wonders in Egypt. So will I do wonders. For you shall gather for all night prayer meetings. This is the time to pray for I have given you this land for an inheritance. You should gather for prayer and fasting in this place, for prayer meeting, all night, STL. You should gather in fellowship more often that I can speak to each one. If you have love for each other, then we should carry one another's burdens.

1990 is the acceptable year of the Lord. It is the year that I will give you victory. This is not the year for defeat. Whosoever will not obey my voice, obey my command, obey my word shall be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it. Many times I called among you, many times I spoke among you and many refuse to obey my voice. But if you will refuse you will be devoured by the sword. For to obey is better than to sacrifice. Be obedient, my children, for I have forewarned you. Walk in my ways, in my paths – lean not on your own understanding – for many are leaning unto their own understanding. But in all thy ways acknowledge me and I will direct they paths. For there is a way that seemeth right unto you but the end is death. For my way is not your way, for my thoughts are not your thoughts. My wisdom is higher than your wisdom, for my mind is higher than your mind. When I speak, obey. Hear, hear, hear what the Lord says unto his children. Obey, Obey, Obey.

Don't be deceived, don't be deceived. Man will come among you to deceive – don't be deceived. Many will pretend to be with you – don't be deceived. Many will pretend that they love you – don't be deceived. Many will pretend that they will give you but don't be deceived. Many will pretend that they will walk with you but don't be deceived. Many will pretend that they will pray with you but don't be deceived. Many will pretend that they are your brothers and your sisters but don't be deceived. Walk together, stick together for I have chosen you. Remember the apostles of old, remember the disciples of old how they walked after Pentecost - although they were scattered, they were still in one accord. Those that were Saducees and those that were priests raised up against them. For many will raise up against you but don't be deceived. Many will come up against you, but

don't be deceived. Many will pretend that they are a part of you – don't be deceived. Be aware who you talk with, be aware what you share over the telephone. For many use the telephone to share, but don't be deceived. For many will use deception but don't be deceived. For many will have a form of godliness, but don't be deceived. Many will have a form of righteousness but don't be deceived. Many will try to deceive and turn themselves into angels of light but don't be deceived. For many will be ministers of wickedness but though they will transform themselves as ministers of righteousness, don't be deceived. Many will seek out information from you but don't be deceived. Many will make promises to you, but don't be deceived.. For I have chosen you to do my work, I have called you by your name. Thou are mine. When you go through the waters, I am with you, when you go through the fires, they shall not burn you. No weapon shall come against you. Though the enemy shall come in like a flood, my Spirit will stand against him. I will be your shield, your buckler. If you refuse to obey, you will be deceived. Remember Judas – he was counted in the ministry but he was deceived. Mark was in the ministry but he was deceived having loved this present world. Demas was deceived. Ananias and Sapphira were deceived. Don't be deceived. Obey, obey, obey my voice. For if thou will be willing, thou will eat the good of the land. Abraham obeyed my voice and it was counted to him for righteousness. Be one as my Father and I are one, for I have prayed that you will be one. Be of one mind, be of one heart, be of one unity. Obey my voice - Peter obeyed my voice, James obeyed my voice, John obeyed my voice, Thomas obeyed my voice, Luke obeyed my voice. Don't look to the armour of flesh for it will fail. Don't look to the Egyptians for they are only men but look with the Lord who is your salvation, who is your strength. If you make man your strength, he will fail but if you make the Lord your strength, you shall prosper. You shall be strong and they that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits. For this year is the year of exploits. For this year is the year of exploits, STL and those that know me will be strong. Be careful who you speak with - be careful, my children, be careful, be careful.

Don't be deceived, for this is the word of the Lord unto his people.

For many will want to hear, many will want to hear what went on but they will not believe. Don't be deceived – for as Joshua held his peace when he was going around the walls of Jericho, so shall you hold your peace. For if you hold your peace the walls will come tumbling down. Many walls will come tumbling down in 1990 if you hold your peace. Many eyes are not opened to the mystery of iniquity, to the spiritual wickedness in high places. Many believe that they are for us, but they are not of us. They are like the sanballasts and the Tobiahs, to seek out and spy out how the walls are going up. They want to break down the walls.

Hear my children tonight that gather in this place, hear the word of the Lord – we shall have no dealing with the Sanballats and the Tobiahs for they will break down the walls that we want to build up. But yea, STL, I have called you to build back the walls. As I called Nehemiah, so have I called you. Remember Joshua - so hold your peace. Do not let a word proceed out of your mouth until the day that I tell you to shout. Then will you shout and the victory will come. No one knew what Nehemiah told no man, but when the time was right God started the work.

There will be a sign unto you. When it comes to pass, you will know that I the Lord hath spoken. Many will see the sign and know that it is the sign unto us, saith the Lord

PRAISE THE LORD

### **The Words of the Lord Jan 2, 1990**

Thus saith the Lord, I the Lord God will pass through the Caribbean.

Guyana - you will feel my wrath once more because you worship your money. I have caused it to devalue many times. I will pass through once more.

Antigua - your sins have come up. Many will mourn. Many will weep. My sword is over your land. I will cut from the south and the north and the east and the west.

Jamaica - for thou art a rebellious nation, Oh Jamaica, I am no longer on your side. Thou are rebellious. Time after time I sent my servants and you have rejected. You have accepted the false gods, but I am a jealous God. Thou shalt have no other God but me. I am tired of your sins, Jamaica, No mercy Jamaica. I shall move in my wrath.

Trinidad - your abominations are great before me. Your witchcraft has come up before me. But Trinidad my anger is kindled against you. Great will be your mourning and your weeping. For I will move without mercy. Your sin is terrible. Trinidad, the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is great among you. Your sin will not go unpunished.

Tortola - even you. Tortola, even you. The Nation has forgotten me. But Tortola, I will not spare you in my wrath.

St. Lucia - I have sent warning to you. I have warned you before your destruction. You have continued to worship the false gods, but St. Lucia I am I am and I was from the beginning and I always will be. When I move in my wrath, let the gods that you serve from your youth save you. My wrath is poured out against you.

Barbados - You are no longer the gem of the Caribbean. You have sold your birthright. I have spared you time after time but you are rebellious. My sword is in you land, Not even in my house do men stand up for righteousness anymore. But I will visit from my churches. Barbados, your whoredoms are great. Many eyes are not opened to the iniquity. Once you stood for righteousness but many false religions, many occults have committed whoredom. But I will judge you Barbados. I will judge you Barbados. When I pass my judgement upon you, many will turn from their sinful and rebellious ways. Many of us recognize that I am the true and living God. Many will worship me in spirit and in truth.

Oh my people - I shall show you a sign in this year 1990. Even in my church I will show a sign unto you. When it comes to pass, then you shall know that I the Lord God has spoken.

PRAISE THE LORD