

Doctrine of the Prophet

1. Three words are used to translate the word “*prophet*” in the Authorized Version.
 - Hebrew. *nabiy'* (*naw-bee'*) and refers to an inspired man. *Genesis 20:7 Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.*
 - Greek. *prophetes* (*prof-ay'-tace*; *pro* + *phemi*, *to show*); a foreteller (“*prophet*”); by analogy, *an inspired speaker*; by extension, *a poet*. *Matthew 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,*
 - Greek. *pseudoprophetes* (*psyoo-dop-rof-ay'-tace*); a spurious prophet, i.e. pretended foreteller or religious impostor: *Acts 13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:*

2. Abraham is the first person in the Bible to be called a prophet though not the first to prophesy for Enoch holds that distinction.
 - *Genesis 20:7 Now therefore restore the man [Abraham] his wife [Sarah]; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.*
 - *Jude 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,*

3. A primary function of a prophet was to act as a mediator between man and God to speak forth-revelatory knowledge. In Exodus 7:1 Moses was invested with God like power so that in effect when he spoke it was as if Yahweh was speaking. Therefore, Aaron became a prophetic intermediary between Moses (God) and Pharaoh.
 - *Exodus 7:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.*

4. God told Aaron and Miriam that He alone appoints His spokesperson and speaks to them in a dream. Since Aaron and Miriam had not been divinely appointed nor received revelatory knowledge in a dream from God it was inappropriate for them to criticize Moses or question his authority as they had done.
 - *Numbers 12:6 And he [God] said [unto Aaron and Miriam], Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.*

5. Anyone can claim to be a prophet and many do. Since the beginning of creation Satan has tried to usurp God's authority. One method he uses is to counterfeit what God does. Because God has prophets, Satan does too. The Enemy puts his revelatory word into the hearts of his "prophets" which are proven to be false by their failed utterances.
 - *Deuteronomy 13:1 If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, 2 And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; 3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

6. The church is responsible for rendering a righteous judgment as to who is a true prophet and who is not. The penalty for being exposed as a false prophet in the church of the Old Testament was death.
 - *Deuteronomy 13:5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.*
 - *Deuteronomy 18:20 But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.*

7. Moses promised God would raise up a Prophet from among the people of Israel that would be like him and even greater than he is. This prophetic pronouncement is significant for embodied in Christ is the full revelation of divine truth.
 - *Deuteronomy 18:15 The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; ... 18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.*
 - *Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

8. The distinguishing test between a false prophet and a true prophet was accuracy. A true prophet of God had to be one hundred percent accurate one hundred percent of the time.
- *Deuteronomy 18:22 When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.*
9. As a prophet Moses was without equal until the appearance of Jesus Christ. Jesus was greater than Solomon. He was greater than Jonah. He was greater than Moses. He was better than the angels.
- *Deuteronomy 34:10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face,*
 - *Luke 11:31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*
10. The church does not know some of her prophets nor does it matter, for the message is more important than the man.
- *Judges 6:8 That the LORD sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage;*
 - *1 Kings 20:13 And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it in to thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.*
11. All the church can know without question when a prophet has been established in its midst.
- *1 Samuel 3:20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.*
11. Before a person was called a prophet in Israel they were referred to as a *ro'eh* (*ro-eh'*), a seer referring to someone who had seen a vision.
- *1 Samuel 9:9 (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)*
12. The righteous not only sought counsel from the prophets but obeyed their counsel.
- *1 Samuel 22:5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.*

13. A partial list of specific biblical prophets can be noted.

• Enoch	Jude 1:14
• Abraham	Genesis 20:7
• An unknown prophet to Israel	Judges 6:8
• Aaron	Exodus 7:1
• Moses	Deuteronomy 18:15
• Samuel	1 Samuel 3:20
• Nathan	2 Samuel 7:2
• Gad	2 Samuel 12:25
• Ahijah the Shilonite	1 Kings 11:29
• An old prophet in Bethel	1 Kings 13:11
• Jehu	1 Kings 16:7
• Elijah	1 Kings 18:2
• Elisha	1 Kings 19:16
• An unknown prophet to Ahab	1 Kings 20: 13
• Four hundred prophets	1 Kings 22:6
• Micaiah	1 Kings 22:8
• An unknown young man	2 Kings 9:4
• Jonah	2 Kings 14:25
• Isaiah	2 Kings 19:2
• An unknown prophet of Samaria	2 Kings 23:18
• Shemaiah	2 Chronicles 12:5
• Iddo	2 Chronicles 12:15
• Oded	2 Chronicles 15:8
• Jeremiah	2 Chronicles 36:12
• Haggai	Ezra 5:1
• Zechariah	Ezra 5:1

14. Religious projects such as the building of a permanent temple were discussed with the prophets. It was the prophet Nathan who encouraged king David to proceed with the desire of his heart.

- *2 Samuel 7:2 That the king [David] said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. 3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee.*

15. Nathan was also the prophet to rename Solomon, “*Jedidiah*” {*beloved of Yahweh*) according to the revelatory will of God.

- *2 Samuel 12:25 And he [the LORD] sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.*

16. While being a prophet or spokesperson for God was a great honor, it was also at times emotionally painful for the judgment of the Lord sometimes had to be pronounced.

- *2 Samuel 24:11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, 12 Go and say unto David, Thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee. 13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? Or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? Or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? Now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.*

17. As Gad foretold David of the choices of divine discipline another prophet named Ahijah informed Jeroboam how the kingdom of Israel would be split in two.

- *1 Kings 11:29 And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: 30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: 31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: 32(But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) 33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. 34 Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes:*

18. Prophets were not without sin or treacherous behavior. An unnamed old prophet in Bethel lied in order to test a man of God only to witness his death.

- *1 Kings 13:11 Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. 12 And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. 13 And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, 14 And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am. 15 Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. 16 And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: 17 For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. 18 He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. 19 So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. 20 And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back:*

21 And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, 22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. 23 And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. 24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. 25 And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. 26 And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him. 27 And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. 28 And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass. 29 And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him.

- **Special note.** Matthew Henry comments on this old prophet of Bethel and calls him a false prophet. “I cannot but call him a false prophet and a bad man, it being much easier to believe that from one of such a bad character should be extorted a confirmation of what the man of God said (as we find, v. 32) than that a true prophet, and a good man, should tell such a deliberate lie as he did, and father it upon God. A good tree could never bring forth such corrupt fruit. Perhaps he was trained up among the sons of the prophets, in one of Samuel's colleges not far off, whence he retained the name of a prophet, but, growing worldly and profane, the spirit of prophecy had departed from him. If he had been a good prophet he would have reproved Jeroboam's idolatry, and not have suffered his sons to attend his altars, as, it should seem, they did.”

19. Prophets had to be fearless and not men pleasers. They had to be willing to risk their lives for the sake of the gospel as Jehu, the son of Hanani who spoke against king Baasha.

- *1 Kings 16:7* And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

20. A prophet could be given to natural feelings of discouragement and self-pity.

- *1 Kings 18:22* Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

21. As a faithful prophet Elijah was concerned for the honor of God and his own self-authentication as the LORD's spokesperson.

- *1 Kings 18:36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.*
22. God has never left His people without a prophetic voice. When one prophet passed from the scene another was appointed as Elisha replaced Elijah.
- *1 Kings 19:16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.*
23. The function of a prophet involved telling forth the revelatory Word of God. Sometimes, but not always, this forth telling involved foretelling specific events.
- *1 Kings 20:22 And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.*
24. It is always wise to consult the Word of the Lord on matters of life.
- *1 Kings 22:7 And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?*
 - *2 Kings 3:11 But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.*
25. When the message of a prophet was not appreciated, an alternative was sought as if the Word of God is changeable and only a matter of personal opinion.
- *1 Kings 22:8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.*
26. Though the primary function of a prophet was to be a mediator between God and man with a revelatory message, some prophets were given power to perform miracles.
- *2 Kings 5:3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! For he would recover him of his leprosy.*
 - *2 Kings 20:11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow [of the sun] ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.*
27. Like Elijah, Elisha wanted Israel to know there was a prophet in the land. His ministry had been confirmed.

- *2 Kings 5:8 And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.*

28. Prophetic men had to be trained. They had to be men under authority if they were to exercise authority.

- *2 Kings 9:1 And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead: ...2 Kings 9:4 So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead.*

29. Sometimes a faithful prophet became a reluctant prophet.

- *Jonah, the faithful prophet. 2 Kings 14:25 He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher.*
- *Jonah, the reluctant prophet. Jonah 1:1 Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. 3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.*

30. Religious commentators have divided the prophets into “major” and “minor” prophets based on the amount of their writings. Little did Isaiah, the son of Amoz anticipate that centuries later the church would still be studying his life and ministry.

- *2 Kings 19:2 And he [king Hezekiah] sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.*

31. Perhaps the saddest news to deliver for physician or prophet is the day of a person’s death.

- *2 Kings 20:1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*

32. Prophets were ordinary men with an extraordinary spiritual gift. They were not omniscient. They only knew what God revealed to them. Other than that they had to gather information through normal assimilation of data.

- *2 Kings 20:14 Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? And from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, even from Babylon.*

33. There are some prophetic books that have not been preserved.

- *The Book of Shemaiah. 2 Chronicles 12:15 Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.*
- *The Story of Iddo. 2 Chronicles 13:22 And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo.*

34. A practical effect of the prophetic word was courage to do right by those who heard.

- *2 Chronicles 15:8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that was before the porch of the LORD.*