

The Prophet

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, PROPHETS; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;" (Ephesians 4:11)

In this lesson we will study the Prophet's office. Only those who lack knowledge or suffer from unbelief could possibly deny the existence of this precious office today. The Prophet brings the Body to maturity and we do still need to mature. (Ephesians 4:12-14)

The Greek word for Prophet is "*prophetes*." It means, "A foreteller and an inspired speaker." This office, as all the offices, functions completely through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

It is uncommon indeed, in fact, exceptionally rare for an individual to start out in the Prophet's office. This office and the Apostle's office require much training in the lower, yet equally as important, Offices of Teacher, Pastor or Evangelist. How much training depends upon the individual. (1Timothy 2:7; 2Timothy 1:11) Once faithfulness is proven, promotion begins.

Prophets, like all other Ministry offices, have varying degrees of anointing. Some Prophets have much stronger anointings than other Prophets. We see this clearly in the lives of the Prophets Elijah and Elisha. Whatever level of anointing a Prophet may have, he or she can increase it through prayer, study and holy living.

Let's look at the primary qualifications of the Prophet's office.

The primary thrust of a Prophet's Ministry is preaching and teaching the Bible. This was true with Jesus. (Matthew 9:35) It was true of the Apostle Paul. (1Timothy 2:7; 2Timothy 1:11) Jesus and Paul were first and foremost Preacher/Teachers. John the Baptist was not a Teacher, but he was a Preacher/Prophet.

Prophets spend much more time in prayer and study than the average Minister. Their messages usually come entirely by inspiration once they are in the pulpit. They can behave strangely at times, as well. (Mark 7:33; 8:23; John 9:6) Yet somehow the unusual behavior always sets someone free. Theirs is a unique and supernatural Ministry indeed.

Prophets also operate very consistently in the Revelation Gifts. These are the Word of Knowledge, the Word of Wisdom and the Discerning of Spirits. Prophets see into the spirit realm and know things about people, past, present and future, but only as the Holy Spirit reveals it to them. They do not know all things about all people at all times. They know only what the Holy Spirit is showing them at the moment. This happens far more consistently with the Prophet than with all the other offices. It also happens in private far more often than it does in public. (1Kings 17:9-24; 18:1-8; 2Kings 4:1-37; John 4:5-19)

Prophets experience visions as well as revelations. (2Corinthians 12:1) Prophets are not omniscient but they do have visions and revelations far more than the average Minister or

layperson. (2Kings 4:27; 5:20-27) This is not the Prophet's main job though. He or she is first and foremost a Preacher/Teacher. When the Holy Spirit does reveal something to the Prophet, it is to be judged according to the Bible standard. (1Corinthians 14:29,30)

The Prophet's Ministry is also a healing Ministry, but the Prophet cannot heal anyone at will. However, there is a consistent healing anointing that accompanies this office. (2Kings 5:1-19; Matthew 14:36; Luke 4:27; 17:11-19; John 9:6,7) Some Prophets operate more strongly in Revelation Gifts than in the Gifts of Healings and vice versa. It is all up to the Holy Spirit which Prophet will operate more strongly in what Gifts and when.

Finally, the Prophet is not in the guidance business. In the Old Testament they gave guidance to folks, but not in the New Testament. Believers are to seek their own guidance through the Bible and through the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 8:14)

Some New Testament Believers insist on being led by the Prophet's Ministry. That violates the New Testament standard and opens one up to evil spirits. (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6,27; Deuteronomy 18:11) When Believers pressure God's Prophets for guidance, they motivate Satan! Prophets can confirm what someone already knows the Lord is saying. (Acts 13:1-3) However, it is rare for a New Testament Prophet to offer guidance. Occasionally it does happen, but rarely.

"Prophets" who offer guidance all the time are to be shunned like the plague. So are "Prophets" who prophesy your stuff into their storehouses. That is completely unscriptural. (2Kings 5:20-27) They may as well be robbing a liquor store at gunpoint. Just say a bold "No" to thug "Prophets" who try to "prophesy" your possessions away from you.

The Prophets Office, above all other Ministry Offices, is the target of unending, relentless persecution of Satan and demon powers. Unfortunately, this commonly manifests through unlearned Christians and Ministers as well as unbelievers. This is just one reason why no one should ever attempt to stand in this Office if God has not graced them and anointed them for it.