



Prophets and Prophecy: True or False?

*A Study of Characteristics of True Prophets and
True Gifts of Prophecy*



What Is a Prophet? What does it mean to Prophecy?

The gift of prophecy is a Spirit-empowered ability to receive and communicate divine revelation for the building up of the church.

To prophesy is to proclaim a message from God. The one who proclaims this message is called a prophet.

- Prophetic foretelling is predicting future events through revelations from God.
- Prophetic forthtelling is the preaching and teaching of the word of God.

Signs often validated the teachings of the true prophets of the Bible

Pagan religious figures and also called prophets. False prophets are also called prophets.



The source of true prophecy

2 Peter 1:21 – “for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”

Hebrews 1:2 – “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”

John the Baptist

Matthew 11:9-15; Luke 16:16

God's servant called by God to prepare the way for the Messiah.

John was the last of the Old Testament prophets. The last prophet of the Old Covenant. No more prophets for the nation of Israel.

Now we are under the new covenant. God has sent someone greater than the prophets (Jesus). God's Spirit is given to all within the body of Christ, starting with the Day of Pentecost.

Jesus as prophet

Deuteronomy 18:15, Acts 3:22, 7:37, Luke 7:16

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Moses that The LORD would raise up a prophet like him from the people of Israel.

Jesus spoke the word of God under divine inspiration. He was truly “God with us.”

He proved he was a true prophet by predictions that came true (Mark 8:31; Luke 19:43-44) and by signs and wonders that he performed.

New Testament prophets

Joel 2:28-29; Acts 11:27-28; 21:8,9

Examples and teachings in Acts and the New Testament epistles demonstrate that prophecy did not cease with John the Baptist

Prophecy as a gift of the Spirit

Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12 – 14; Ephesians 4:1-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:20,21; 2 Peter 1:20,21

The gift of prophecy, as described in the Bible, is a spiritual ability given by God to certain believers for the purpose of edifying, exhorting, and comforting the church. Unlike mere prediction, biblical prophecy involves speaking forth God's message under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, providing direction, encouragement, and correction to God's people. The purpose is to build up the community of faith.

Discerning False Prophets and Prophecies

Matthew 24:24,25; Mark 13:22; Deuteronomy 13 & 18; 1 Corinthians 14:29-32; 2 Timothy 4:3,4; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1;

- False prophets and prophecies are warned against by Moses, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jesus, Paul, Peter and John and many others in Scripture.
- We are to “test the spirits to see whether they are from God.”

Deuteronomy 13:1-5

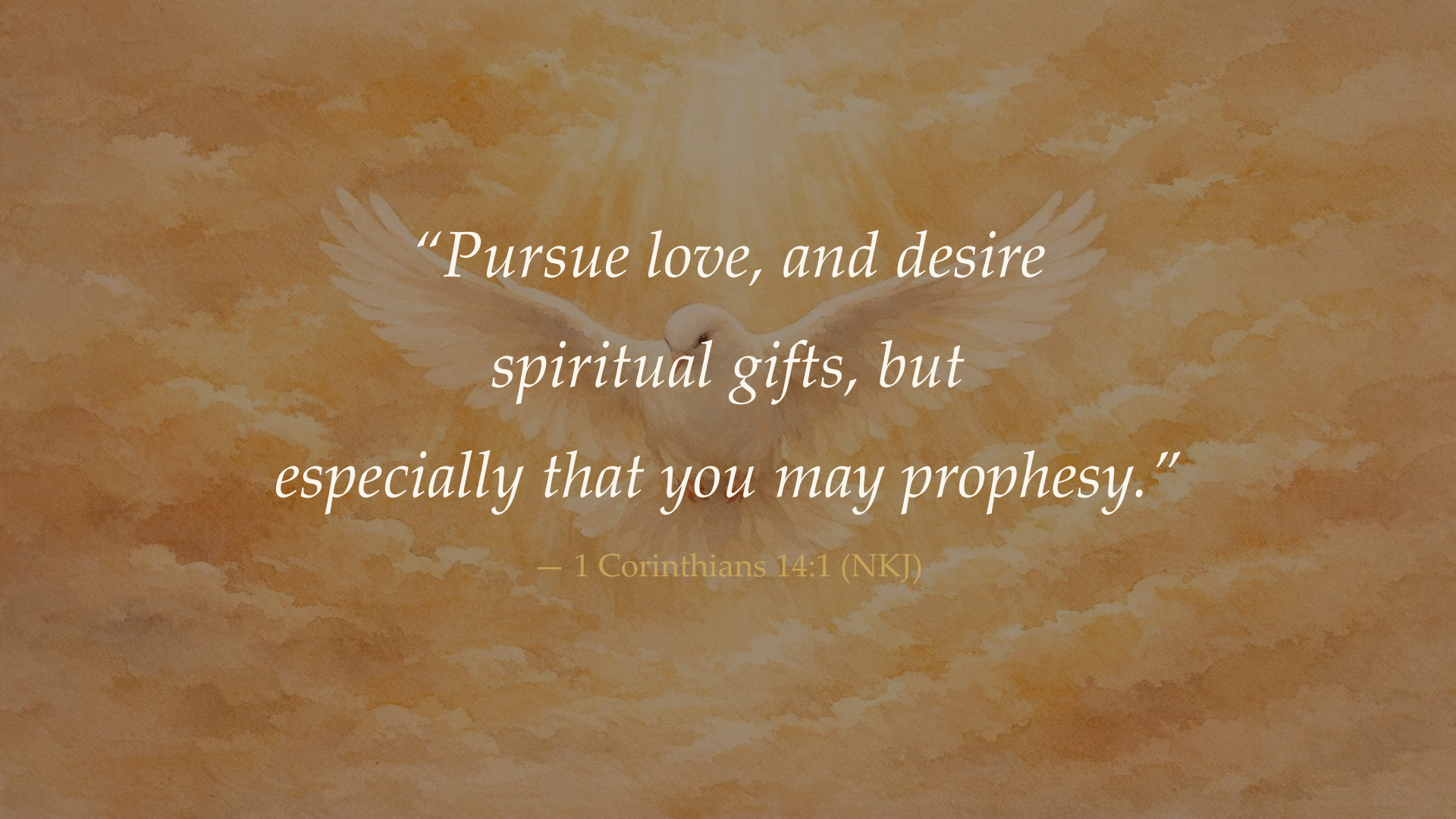
Gives two signs of a True Prophet:

- What the prophet predicts must come to pass.
- What he teaches must not direct people to follow other gods.

Deuteronomy 18:20-22

The sin of presumption (speaking a word in the name of the LORD that He has not commanded him to speak):

- What the prophet predicts must come to pass. **Complete** accuracy in foretelling is a critical test.



*“Pursue love, and desire
spiritual gifts, but
especially that you may prophesy.”*

— 1 Corinthians 14:1 (NKJ)