

PURPOSE OF STUDY: To teach what the Bible says about prophets, their purpose, the importance of their ministry and its continuing role in the Christian church.

TEXTS:

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| 1. REV 19:10 (REV 12:17) | 9. 2CH 9:29 (2CH 21:12; AC 11:28) |
| 2. EX 4:14-16; 7:1 | 10. IS 8:20 |
| 3. JE 1:9 | 11. PR 16:25 (PS 32:8) |
| 4. LK 1:70 (AC 3:21) | 12. MT 23:37 |
| 5. RO 1:2 (2PE 1:20-21) | 13. LK 13:33 |
| 6. 1PE 1:10-12 | 14. LK 6:26; JE 5:31 (2CH 18:7) |
| 7. AC 11:27; 15:32; 21:8-9 | 15. 2CH 36:15-16 |
| 8. EP 4:11-13 | 12. 2CH 20:20 |

THE STUDY:

- 1. What spiritual gift is an identifying characteristic of God's last-day church? REV 19:10 (REV 12:17)**
The testimony of Jesus Christ, or the gift of prophecy.
- 2. According to the Bible, what exactly is a "prophet"? EX 4:14-16; 7:1**
Many people assume that a prophet is someone who tells the future. However, according to Scripture, a prophet is first and foremost a spokesperson for God. The Hebrew word for prophet is nabi (nab'-ee); the Greek word is prophetes (pro-fay'-tase); both words simply mean "spokesperson." While there were certainly prophets that predicted future events, the prophets were especially known as messengers from God, often beginning their messages with the phrase "Thus saith the Lord..."
- 3. What did God promise to put in the prophet Jeremiah's mouth? JE 1:9**
The prophet's mouth was filled with God's words – a message from Him to His people.
- 4. How long has God used prophets to communicate His will? LK 1:70 (AC 3:21)**
God has spoken by His prophets since the world began. While God has communicated with humanity in various ways, the method He has used more than any other has been the prophetic ministry.
- 5. How do we benefit from the messages of the prophets? RO 1:2 (2PE 1:20-21)**
Although the prophets "spoke" their messages in their day, many of those messages were written out and collected into what have become the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is the collective teaching of the prophets, and thus the product of the gift of prophecy.
- 6. Who does Peter say spoke through the Old Testament prophets? 1PE 1:10-12**
It was Jesus Himself who spoke through the prophets. This is why Scripture often refers to the gift of prophecy as "the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:17; 19:10), or simply "the testimony" (Is. 8:20).
- 7. Was the gift of prophecy also active in the New Testament Church? AC 11:27; 15:32; 21:8-9 (REV)**
Yes it was. The Bible is very clear that the gift of prophecy was an integral part of the New Testament church. It is important to note that whereas women in the NT did not serve as apostles, pastors, or elders, they did serve as prophets (prophetesses).
- 8. How long was the gift of prophecy to continue with the church? EP 4:11-13**
The gift of prophecy, along with the other spiritual gifts, was given to aid the church in proclaiming the gospel to the world and to help its members grow up into spiritual maturity. Until these two things are accomplished, the gifts will be active in the church.

9. Did all the prophets write books of the Bible? 2CH 9:29 (2CH 21:12; AC 11:28)

No. The Bible speaks of the writings of the prophets Nathan, Ahijah and Iddo, but their writings were not included in the Bible. It also speaks of at least one letter of the prophet Elijah that never made it into the canon of Scripture. We also have the examples of Gad (1 Sam. 22:5), Elisha (2 Ki. 6:12), and Agabus (Ac. 11:28) – prophets who, to our knowledge, never wrote out their prophetic messages.

10. What was the primary function of the gift of prophecy? IS 8:20

The word “law” in this passage comes from the Hebrew word “torah.” Torah is a word that means “instruction,” and is understood by Jews to refer to the first five books of the Bible written by Moses – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The “testimony,” as we have seen, refers to the gift of prophecy. The main function of the prophets – the “testimony” – has always been to point God’s people back to His “instruction” as given in the Scriptures. In short, the prophets point to the Bible as the rule of faith and practice for the Christian.

11. Why do we need the prophets if we already have the Bible? PR 16:25 (PS 32:8)

Because our natural hearts lead us astray. God’s people, while they claimed to follow the Bible, were often found living in contradiction to its teachings, so He sent them prophets for a “course correction...” Incidentally, this same question could have been asked in Isaiah’s day, or Jeremiah’s day, or Paul’s day, but God has continued sending His messengers to safely guide His people into the truth.

12. How did Jesus describe Jerusalem in his final public address? MT. 23:37

“The one who kills the prophets.”

13. Should we ever expect a true prophet to be popular, even among professed Christians? LK 13:33

No. The prophets of God were categorically rejected by the people of God. The prophets rebuked the sins of the people, and instead of humbling their hearts before God, His people resented them for it.

14. Why were the false prophets so popular? LK 6:26; JER 5:31 (2CH 18:7)

Because they told the people what they wanted to hear instead of what they needed to hear.

15. What happens when God’s people disregard the gift of prophecy? 2CH 36:15-16

When God’s people disregard the words of His prophets, they have exhausted the last avenue through which He can reach them and warn them of their danger. There is “no remedy” left!

16. What is God’s secret to success in the Christian life? 2CH 20:20

While the warnings of the prophets have led people to coin the phrase “prophets of doom,” the truth is that the messages of the prophets were given in order to lead people back to God, the source of all comfort and hope. If we would prosper spiritually, we must heed the warnings and admonitions of God’s prophets.

APPEAL:

In every age Jesus has spoken to His people through the prophets. He has given warnings, guidance, encouragement and hope as needed for them to prosper in their spiritual lives. In these last days, He still speaks to us through His prophets. Are you willing to listen?