

26 HOW IDENTIFY A TRUE PROPHET

One day we may have to face the question that Paul addressed to King Agrippa: "Believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest" (Acts 26:27). However, we are usually skeptical of a person who claims to have a message from God. How can we differentiate between true and false? Throughout time, God has guided His people through messengers. Does the Bible suggest the existence of prophets in our day?



GOD COMMUNICATES WITH MAN

1. In the beginning, God communicated with man face to face, but sin separated him from God (Isaiah 59:2). Christ bridged the gap between man and God. **What means did God provide to reveal His mysteries to men? Amos 3:7.** _____

The prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

2. **Is being a prophet by human designation, by inheritance, or does it come directly from God? Ephesians 4:8, 11.** _____

3. **What is a prophet?**

The word prophet comes from two Hebrew words: roeh, which means to see; that is why a prophet is also called a seer (1 Samuel 9:9), and the word nabi, which means to declare. Therefore, a prophet sees and declares what God shows him and then he writes down the message (Daniel 7:1). He tells of future events, according to the revelation and will of God.

4. **How does God transmit His messages to the prophets? Numbers 12:6-8.**

_____ to _____: this method was used only with Moses

In _____: with his eyes opened, but without breathing, the prophet sees in a panoramic view what God shows him concerning the past, present or future, as well as events in the invisible world.

Through prophetic dreams: this method should not be confused with common dreams, which are a product of the mind's automatic, natural subconscious (Ecclesiastes 5:7). Prophets existed in both the New and Old Testament times. Many misinterpret the text in Matthew 11:13 and think that after John the Baptist there would be no more prophets. However, we can see that there were other prophets after John: Agabus (Acts 21:10), Anna (Luke 2:36), Simon (Acts 13:1), and more. Paul, Peter and Judas also prophesied.

5. **What type of prophets are to arise at the end of time? Matthew 24:24.** _____

6. **What is God's purpose in giving the prophetic gift to His people? Ephesians 4:11, 12.**

To _____ the saints, showing them their errors and warning them. To _____ the body of Christ by showing the wonder of His plan of salvation and the events to come. To help bring about unity in faith, clearly showing God's will.

7. **According to the book of Revelation, would the last church have the gift of prophecy? Revelation 12:17; 19:10.** *The testimony of Jesus is the* _____

8. **How can we distinguish a true prophet from a false one?**

TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRUE PROPHET:

1. His life should be an example (Matthew 7:15, 16). "Ye shall know them by their fruits." The results of his work will testify of their divine origin.
2. "To the law and to the testimony" (Isaiah 8:20). His teachings will be in harmony with the law of God and with the message of previous prophets.

3. All the prophecies he proclaims come true (Deuteronomy 18:22).
4. He does not incite apostasy or separation from the will of God (Deuteronomy 13:1-4).
5. He acknowledges Christ's incarnation (1 John 4:1-3).
6. His messages are straightforward. He does not flatter; on the contrary, he points out the people's sins (Isaiah 58:1), and God's imminent judgment (Revelation 14:6, 7).
7. His messages are important, not trivial. He contributes to the spiritual growth of the church and gives advice on religious matters (2 Corinthians 13:2, 3).
8. His teachings and his life will have Christ at their core (2 Corinthians 10:5).
9. He will prophesy in the Lord's name and he will never give his own interpretation (2 Peter 1:20, 21).
10. We should look at how he receives the visions and his relationship to the people of his time (Daniel 10:8).

THE PROPHETIC GIFT AND THE WOMAN

9. Can a woman have a prophetic gift? The Bible mentions:

- a) Miriam (Exodus 15:20) b) Deborah (Judges 4:4) c) Hilkiah (2 Kings 22:14)
 d) Anna (Luke 2:36) e) Phillip's four daughters (Acts 21:9).

10. Was this gift manifested in the church of God in the times of the end?

In 1844, when according to prophecy the truth that had been trodden underfoot would be restored, God sent a message to his people through the Spirit of Prophecy. Ellen Harmon, later Ellen G. White, a feeble 17-year-old young woman, was a precious instrument in God's hands. She fulfilled all ten characteristics previously mentioned. Those who have read her writings see that they work for the improvement and spiritual growth of the church and promote unity of faith. In spite of her limited education, she wrote about 100,000 pages published in more than 50 books which are in circulation today, along with hundreds of pamphlets, and about 4000 articles for several magazines. Religious scholars acknowledge that her writings are inspired. She received revelations, wrote, and preached to millions of people from 1844 to 1915, which is more than 70 years. Many people testify that she led an exemplary life. At every moment, she exalted Jesus Christ as primary and presented Him in the most wonderful way; she also lifted up the holy law of God. Her prophecies were all accurately fulfilled, including the First World War, the destruction of ships and large buildings, and fires that no one was able to put out; the destruction of San Francisco and Oakland (California) in the 1906 earthquake; the increase of spiritualism and the union of Catholics and Protestants; without having any formal education in astronomy, she gave accurate astronomical data, and she also gave scientific information about health, such as prenatal influences. Furthermore, the origin of cancer, nutrition, etc. In her many writings, there is no contradiction with the Bible. Her writings are like a microscope; they do not contradict but amplify details. They are also like a telescope that does not recreate new stars but shows the beauty of the ones that exist. A few of her books are: Steps to Christ (published in more than 100 languages), The Great Controversy, The Desire of Ages, The Ministry of Healing, Patriarchs and Prophets, Prophets and Kings, Child Guidance, Testimony Treasures, etc. The central point of Ellen White's message was Christ's life - His incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection and present work on behalf of sinners in the heavenly sanctuary. The best glimpses into the life of Jesus Christ ever written are found in her books: Steps to Christ and The Desire of Ages, among other, whose reading we advise.

CONCLUSION

11. Thanks to this divine help, we have a deeper understanding of God's ways. What happens to God's people without the prophetic word? Proverbs 29:18. _____

12. What advice does God give us? 1 Thessalonians 5:20, 21.

_____ *God's word says that the last church will have the gift of prophecy. If these revelations did not exist, we would not meet the requirements of the true church.*

13. How long will this gift be necessary? Ephesians 4:13. _____

14. What does God promise to those who believe in the prophets? 2 Chronicles 20:20 _____

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My decision: I believe that God revealed Himself to the last church through the spirit of prophecy. Yes No
