

ZOOM STUDY: IMPORTANT BIBLICAL TERMS

PROPHET

Introduction: Define prophecy.

1.) What were the functions and responsibilities of a prophet?

Ezekiel 2:1-7 He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you.”² As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.³ He said: “Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day.⁴ The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says.’⁵ And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious house—they will know that a prophet has been among them.⁶ And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briars and thorns are all around you and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of what they say or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house.⁷ You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious.”

Isaiah 6:8-10 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”⁹ He said, “Go and tell this people: ‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’¹⁰ Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”

Ezekiel 37:9-14 Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe into these slain, that they may live.’”¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army.¹¹ Then he said to me: “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.’¹² Therefore prophecy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: O my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel.¹³ Then you, my people, will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them.¹⁴ I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.’”

2 Peter 1:21 Prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2.) Which of the Old Testament prophets do you admire the most? At the same time what do we see in all of their lives?

3.) In what ways was Jesus the perfect Prophet?

Deuteronomy 18:15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.”

Hebrews 1:1-3 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.³ The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

Isaiah 11:2-3a The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD—³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known. (cf. also John 3:13)

4.) Does God still give the gift of prophecy today? Does this include you?

Acts 2:17-18 “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.”

Romans 12:6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith.

1 Peter 4:10-11 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.¹¹ If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God.

5.) What are the similarities and differences in the work of an ancient prophet and a modern pastor?

6.) What principles should we apply whenever anyone (be that pope, pastor, or everyday Christian) claims to have received a direct revelation from God?

Jeremiah 23:16-18, 25-29 This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.¹⁷ They keep saying to those who despise me, ‘The LORD says: You will have peace.’ And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, ‘No harm will come to you.’¹⁸ But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word?” ...²⁵ “I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, ‘I had a dream! I had a dream!’²⁶ How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the

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delusions of their own minds? ²⁷ They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their fathers forgot my name through Baal worship. ²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares the LORD. ²⁹ "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

Matthew 7:15-23 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. ²¹ Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

1 Corinthians 14:29-33 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. ³⁰ And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. ³¹ For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. ³² The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

7.) Although not identical with prophetic claims, how should we respond to claims of receiving signs from God?

Mark 8:11-12 The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply and said, "Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it."

Mark 16:20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

1 Corinthians 1:22-24 Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Matthew 24:24-25 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.

Closing Prayer: Jesus, holy Prophet, you are the radiance of the Father's glory. We acclaim you as God's full, supreme, and loving revelation of himself. Dwell within our hearts, guide our lives, and give us words to speak through your Word, so that all the world around us may know of your great love. Amen.