

LESSON 19

THE MINISTRY OF THE PROPHET

HEB. 1:1,2 GOD NOW SPEAKS THRU JESUS-APPOINTED MINISTERS

In this New Testament age, God now speaks through His Son, Jesus, who has been installed as the functional Head of the Church. As the Head, Jesus relegated His authority and anointing unto certain people whom He has chosen and ordained to minister on His behalf.

This passage by no means, as some theologians purport, eliminates the office of the Prophet, but on the contrary establishes it under the Headship of Jesus for the duration of the Church Age. If this verse was saying that God only speaks through Jesus now, then **ALL** the ministry offices would have been eliminated, not just the office of the prophet, and **ALL** person-to-person ministry on the human level would be unauthorized.

Eph. 4:7-11 After receiving “all authority in heaven and in earth,” Jesus Himself, on the Day of Ascension, as He ascended on high in order to “**SIT DOWN**” at the right hand of the Father, transferred His anointing and authority unto men, thereby creating the Fivefold ministry offices of **Apostles, Prophets**, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

If you eliminate any of these offices, you must eliminate them all, for they are all found in the same verse. But, no where does Scripture say that any of these ministry offices are no longer operable or no longer functioning in the New Testament Church. In fact, it was **AFTER** Jesus had completed His fleshly ministry and ascended into Heaven that all of the ministry offices were established.

The Church Age began with **ALL** ministry offices functioning, and they will continue to be functioning and vital to the spiritual development of the Church, “**UNTIL** we **ALL** attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a **MATURE MAN**” – until the Church reaches full **MANHOOD** unto the measure of Christ Jesus Himself (**vv. 12,13**).

1 COR. 12:28 APOSTLES AND PROPHETS PERMANENTLY SET IN THE CHURCH

“**GOD** has **SET** in the Church, *first* **APOSTLES**, *second* **PROPHETS**...”

“**GOD**” Notice first of all that this whole matter of Apostles and Prophets being set into the Church was God’s idea, not any man’s, nor some apostle’s or prophet’s trying to promote his own ministry; it originated with God. God did not consult man in the matter of how He was going to build His Church. Contrary to the philosophy of some purported believers, the Church is **not** a **democracy** that is operated in accordance with “*Robert’s Rules of Order for Parliamentary Procedure*,” rather it is a **theocracy** operated in accordance with **GOD’S rules of order**. And, God has chosen to build His Church by using Apostles and Prophets as the “master-builders” (we would call them “general-contractors” today) [**1 Cor. 3:10**].

“**SET**” Refers to permanence, to set as concrete; immutable, unchangeable.

“IN THE CHURCH” Apostles and **Prophets** have been permanently established **within the Church** by God Himself as preeminently vital ministries, for the duration of the **Church Age**, and are an integral part of all God is doing on planet earth.

Eph. 4:11-13 **Prophets have not been dispensationally depleted nor cemented into a non-functional foundation** as some theologians contend, but rather they are a vital part of all God has done and shall ever do in His eternal plan for man. This is made clear in **verse 13**, which indicates that **ALL** of the Fivefold Ministry Offices will continue to function in their role of building and instructing – “until” – the collective **“we”** of the true Body of Christ has come into **full maturity** and into **full unity of doctrine**, that is, **“unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God.”** The Living Bible translates this portion like this: **“until we all believe alike.”**

It is the combined task and function of **all** the Fivefold Ministry working in tandem together to bring the Body of Christ to that place of full maturity “unto the measure of the stature of Christ.” “Three-Fold” ministry of Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers, simply cannot get us there. It requires the effectual ministry of Apostles and Prophets in addition to the other three to bring the Church to that place of maturity, both individually and collectively. Until we get to that place, the ministry of the Apostles and Prophets along with the other Fivefold Ministry Offices will be vitally necessary and functioning.

EPH. 2:20 APOSTLES AND PROPHETS ARE THE FOUNDATIONAL MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

The ministries of the Apostles and Prophets are the foundational ministries upon which the Church is built. Without the ministry of Apostles and Prophets the revelation of the “blueprint” and the “gifting” necessary to build the building is incomplete. Without the ministry of the Apostles and Prophets (who are directly connected to the Cornerstone [Christ Jesus]) being in place and functioning, the framework of the building will be askew and out of plumb, which is precisely the present condition of the Church.

DEFINING THE MINISTRY OF PROPHETS – God’s Communication Channels

The Prophet – God’s spokesman: from “pro” = on behalf of / “phet” = to speak. Simply defined, the Prophet is God’s spokesman. The Prophet is a Fivefold Minister who has been set apart, appointed, and anointed with the ministry gifting of a Prophet, and has been permanently set into that office. Though every believer has a vital function he has been anointed and appointed by the Lord to perform, it must be understood that no amount of zeal, enthusiasm, fervor, prayer, or even Bible study, can vault a person into **any ministry office**, including that of **Prophet**. It is only the appointing and anointing of the Lord that makes a prophet a prophet. Fivefold ministry starts with a **calling**, not a desire, and that calling must be from God. Your mother, your father, or your wife cannot call you to the ministry; you can’t even call yourself; **only God** can call a person to the ministry.

True **prophets** are not **novices**, neither are they mere aspiring ministers. A true **prophet** is not someone trying to become a prophet, he **IS** one. While “schools of prophets” can be helpful in developing those that have been anointed by God with the anointing of a prophet, one cannot simply take a course to **“learn”** to be a prophet. No one can really **“teach”** someone to be a prophet. Prophets are **not “taught,”** but are usually **“caught”** and then **“made”** by the Lord. No one can **intrude** into any ministry office successfully, especially the office of the prophet.

We describe the ministry offices merely for the sake of understanding them better, but merely calling yourself something, whether it be: “a prophet,” or “a teacher,” or “a ‘37 Oldsmobile,” for that matter, does not make you one. Any minister is what he is because of what he does, not because of what he calls himself. The best approach for any minister is to simply do all that God has equipped him and allows him to do, and let that define his office.

The **office of the Prophet** and the “**one who prophesies**” (1 Cor. 14:3,5) are two distinct functions with vast differences separating them. “**One who prophesies**” can be **any willing believer** through whom the Holy Spirit chooses to operate the simple manifestation **gift of prophecy**. The **office of the prophet**, however, is only given to “**some**” (Eph. 4:11), that is to say, certain God-selected individuals, who God has anointed with supernatural enablement to minister in a building and instructive capacity. The fact that one is merely used by God to **prophecy** does not make that person a **prophet** by any means. Another major difference is that the simple gift of prophecy by a lay-believer (non-Fivefold Minister) must be limited to edification, exhortation, and comfort, while the ministry of a **prophet** is not so limited, but in addition to these may also include: revelation, illumination, foretelling of future events, divine counsel, guidance, direction, correction, admonition, and in some extreme cases, even rebuke.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF PROPHETS

There are many different kinds of prophets. It is just as incorrect to stereotype prophets as it is to say that all pastors or evangelists, for example, are the same. God made us all different.

We all have different personalities, talents, and abilities that God has given us. All ministers do not have the same calling or emphasis of ministry. This is just as true for prophets. Jeremiah, for example, was called the “weeping prophet,” while Ezra, Nathan, and Gad were “writing prophets,” the latter two of which wrote 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Chronicles.

There are prophets who are also teachers (Ac. 13:1).

There are prophets whose primary ministry is within a local body (1 Cor. 12:28). Some prophets are called to be the local resident apostle over a work, giving it apostolic oversight. Yet, other prophets have a traveling ministry, and some are sent out to function not only as prophets but also as apostles (Acts 13:1-4).

THE FUNCTION OF PROPHETS

Jer. 1:10 In this verse God gives the general functions of the prophet. The different facets of the prophet’s ministry can be summed up in this six-fold description (I have given a brief description of what I believe to be the general application of each of these facets):

- 1) **to pluck (root) up**—“weeds,” both in the lives of individual believers, as well as “weeds” growing in the Church, which is false teaching and brethren.
- 2) **to break down**—resistances and rebellion to God’s Word, Will, and Way by believers.
- 3) **to destroy**—vain philosophies and imaginations raised up against the knowledge of God; and, Satan’s works.
- 4) **to overthrow**—the kingdoms of men; and strongholds of the devil.
- 5) **to build**—the Church spiritually upon the foundation of the Life of Christ.

6) **to plant**— Christ as the Seed of God in the Church and in the individual lives of believers; and, along with Apostles — plant Churches.

The following are some of the functions of prophets which can be deduced from the composite of many different Scriptures far too numerous to list individually.

Reveal **the mind of Christ** and **give specific instruction** concerning His personal **will** for the lives of individuals as well as for groups.

Unveil **revelation** and **illumination** and **inspired application** of the Logos.

Give **confirmation and witness** in various ways through their ministry.

Relate **divine direction** to the Church and churches.

Elicit **repentance, reformation, and restoration**.

The following are some functions of prophets with a specific Scripture citing to support them:

Amos 3:7 **Prophets** are given the secret counsel of God.

1 Sam. 9:9 **Prophets** are **SEERS**; they see things supernaturally in the Spirit that other people don't see.

Jer. 18:18 **Prophets** can hear slander supernaturally.

2 Kgs. 6:8-12 **Prophets** can hear things that are not intended to be heard by others; if God reveals it to them, they can even hear evil plans conceived in privacy and secrecy.

Jer. 1:16,17 **Prophets** pronounce judgment

Eph. 4:11-13 **Prophets** perfect, mature, Saints and the Church to Manhood.

Rev. 11:3-13 **Prophets** will execute God's judgments.

Prophets expose sin:

Eph. 5:11 Exposure of sin is a Divine charge.

Jn. 4:7-19 Jesus, a **Prophet**, exposed the sin of the Samaritan woman.

Mat. 23 Jesus, a **Prophet**, exposed the sin of the Pharisees.

Mk. 6:18 John the Baptist, a **Prophet**, exposed the sin of Herod.

Ac. 13:10,11 **Prophet** Paul (**Ac. 13:1**) exposed sin and brought temporal judgment upon Elymas the magician.

Ac. 16:16 **Prophet** Paul exposes the sin of witchcraft in a fortune-teller.

Gal. 2:11-13 *Prophet* Paul exposed *Apostle* Peter's sin of hypocrisy.

2 Sam. 11:1 - 12:13 Nathan the **Prophet** exposed the sin of David.

2 Kgs. 5:26 Elisha the **Prophet** exposed the sin of his servant.

THE END-TIME ELIJAH COMPANY OF PROPHETS WILL ACCOMPLISH THE FINAL PURPOSES OF THE LORD

THE ELIJAH COMPANY OF PROPHETS presently being raised up by the Lord will fulfill these prophecies – they will:

Prepare the way for the SECOND COMING of Christ – Is. 40:3

Make ready a people (The Church) prepared for the Lord – Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:7,8; Rev. 21:2; Eph. 4:11-13; Eph. 5:25-27

Transform the Church into “An exceedingly Great Army” – Ezk. 37:1-14

Rev. 10:7; 11:15 The ministry of the COMPANY OF PROPHETS will bring the **culmination of the Church Age**.

Acts 3:21 When the **prophets** have finished their ministry, **Christ will be released** to return to claim His Church-Bride.

END-TIME COMPANY OF JUDGMENT PROPHETS

Prior to the return of Christ, God will bring forth a company of prophets who will be His threshing sledge and winnowing fork in His hand (**Is. 41:16; Mat. 3:12**) to execute this judgment of the household of God, which will be the final separation of the wheat from the chaff. **They are coming**, and believers and ministers alike must begin to adjust their attitudes and allow their minds to be enlightened by what the Bible has to say about these very necessary and valid ministries, lest they find themselves fighting against the very plans and purposes of God, and therefore – God Himself.

Until now, the Lord has tolerated a lot within the Body of Christ that He does not intend to tolerate forever. Judgment within “the household of God” (the Church) will precede judgment of the world (**1 Pet. 4:17**). Thus, He is gradually bringing forth His prophets to a place of real function in which they will be performing without constraint (save that of the true nature of the love of God) the six-faceted ministry of prophets, i.e., to: 1) pluck up, 2) break down, 3) destroy, 4) overthrow, 5) build, and 6) plant (**Jer. 1:10**).

Just as God raised up **Elijah** to bring to nought the influence of the false prophets of Baal, so also shall He bring forth **prophets of power and judgment** within the Church who will cause the kingdom of God to suffer violence, and these “violent” prophets of God shall exert the authority of God, in some cases by force over entities and elements within the domain of God which have been resistant to the will and purposes of God.

This article was adapted from the manual and course, *[The Restoration of the Prophetic Gifts and Office](#)*, by [Dr. Steven Lambert](#). You can read more about this virtual encyclopedia of the prophetic as well as all the other writings and publications of Dr. Lambert on the SLM Internet Site at: <http://www.slm.org/pubs/index.html>. Publications may also be [ordered online](#), by calling (561) 575-5584, or by writing **SLM Publications, P.O. Box 744, Jupiter, FL 33468-0744**.

All SLM Publications are copyrighted, all rights reserved and may not be republished in any form, including electronic, without the permission of SLM, Inc. Direct all inquiries to the SLM Publications at: SLM, Inc, P.O. Box 744, Jupiter, FL 33468-0744, or E-mail: staff@slm.org. This is one of many articles posted on the SLM Publications Internet site at: <http://www.slm.org>.