



# Kingdom-Based Fivefold Ministry 2 - Prophets: Foundational Issues Part 4 | KIB 538

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## Kingdom Intelligence Briefing

### Introduction

One of the clearest biblical tests of a prophet is not simply **what he says**, but **who he is**. In both Testaments, God's prophets were first formed in character before they were entrusted with revelation. The New Testament never lowers that standard—**it intensifies it**.

A careful study reveals that the Old Testament prophets provide the template for understanding the ministry described in passages such as Ephesians 4:11–16, 1 Corinthians 12–14, and Acts.

I will organize the study into several major sections.

### Misinterpretation that Opens the Door to False Prophets

#### **1 Corinthians 14:1–3 (ESV)**

**1** Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. **2** For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. **3** On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

**Prophecy:** *Propheteuo*. **Logos Word Sense:** to deliver a prophetic message, either of proper behavior to a standard, or of future events.

To properly understand what the apostle Paul is speaking of here, we must keep everything in context. The error Paul addresses is that young believers have conflated the gift of tongues with the manifestations of the Oracles of Delphi and believe they have a higher social status because they can speak in tongues. During gatherings, those with the gifts wanted to show off and validate their new supposed status. There was no time in the gatherings for the Word to be taught, or for the gift of prophecy (not the gift of the prophet) to be manifested to enrich the body. Paul stressed that tongues and interpretation are restricted to cases where unbelievers are in the assembly, to bring them to Christ. Otherwise, their native language was preferred so that all might be encouraged and edified.

Like the teaching of the Word, the gift of prophecy, which can be manifested through any believer, is for the exhortation, edification, and comfort of those assembled. It does not represent the ministry of the prophet! Yet, these verses have been used by some to define the prophetic ministry, thereby opening the door to false prophets becoming the norm in the modern Church. The truth is, as we will discover from the Word, true prophets are never popular but are necessary for the health of the body!

# Character Study of the Biblical Prophet

## Part I. The Divine Calling

**Principle:** No prophet appoints himself.

### Old Testament Examples

- Moses — called at the burning bush (Exodus 3–4)
- Samuel — called while serving in the Tabernacle (1 Samuel 3)
- Isaiah — called after seeing God's holiness (Isaiah 6)
- Jeremiah — called before birth (Jeremiah 1)
- Ezekiel — called during exile (Ezekiel 1–3)
- Amos — taken from tending sheep (Amos 7)

### New Testament Parallel

True prophets are:

- called by Christ
- sent by Christ
- empowered by the Holy Spirit

Prophets are not self-promoted personalities.

## Part 2 – Characteristics of True Prophets

### 1. Character Trait #1

#### Humility Before God

Every prophet encountered God's holiness before ministering.

#### Examples

- Isaiah - "Woe is me! For I am undone."
- Moses - "Who am I?"
- Jeremiah - "I cannot speak."
- Ezekiel - fell upon his face.
- Daniel - lost all physical strength.

#### New Testament Application

- The closer someone walks with God, the less impressed they become with themselves.
- False prophets seek platforms.
- True prophets seek God's presence.

### 2. Character Trait #2

#### Absolute Submission to God's Word

A prophet never altered God's message.

#### Examples

- Jeremiah - "I cannot speak anything except what the LORD commands."

- Micaiah - "What the LORD says unto me, that will I speak."
- Nathan - Corrected even King David.
- Elijah - Repeatedly declared: "Thus says the LORD."

## New Testament

A genuine prophet today submits every revelation to Scripture. Personal revelation never supersedes written revelation.

### 3. Character Trait #3

#### Holiness

God consistently required separation before proclamation.

#### Examples

- Moses removed his sandals.
- Isaiah's lips were cleansed.
- Jeremiah was sanctified.
- Ezekiel ate God's scroll.

#### Pattern

**Presence**



**Purification**



**Proclamation**

## 4. Character Trait #4

### Courage

Perhaps the most obvious characteristic.

#### Examples

- Elijah confronted Ahab.
- Nathan confronted David.
- Jeremiah confronted Judah.
- Daniel confronted Babylon.
- Amos confronted Israel.
- John the Baptist (transition prophet) confronted Herod.

**None feared losing influence. They feared God.**

## 5. Character Trait #5

### Compassion

The prophet was not merely an announcer of judgment.

- Jeremiah - "The Weeping Prophet"
- Samuel - Prayed continually for Israel.
- Moses - Interceded repeatedly.
- Daniel - Confessed national sin as his own.
- Ezekiel - Grieved over Jerusalem.

A true prophet loves the people enough to warn them.

## 6. Character Trait #6

### Intercession

The prophet stood between God and the people.

Examples

- Moses - Golden calf.
- Samuel - Mizpah.
- Elijah - Mount Carmel.
- Daniel - Daniel 9.
- Jeremiah - Repeated prayers.

The prophet's public ministry flowed from a hidden prayer life.

## 7. Character Trait #7

### Intimacy with God

The prophets were known because they knew God.

- Enoch - Walked with God.
- Moses - Face to face.
- Samuel - None of God's words fell to the ground.
- David (though king) - Was also prophetic because he cultivated intimacy.
- Daniel - Three daily prayers.
- Elijah - "As the LORD lives before whom I stand..."

## 8. Character Trait #8

### Faithfulness Despite Rejection

Nearly every prophet was rejected.

- Moses - Rejected repeatedly.
- Samuel - Rejected by Israel when they demanded a king.
- Elijah - Thought he alone remained.
- Jeremiah - Imprisoned.
- Isaiah - Tradition says he was sawn in two.
- Ezekiel - Ignored.

Their success was measured by obedience—not popularity.

## 9. Character Trait #9

### Obedience at Personal Cost

The prophetic office was costly.

- Hosea – Marriage to a prostitute.
- Ezekiel - Loss of his wife.
- Jeremiah - Loneliness.
- Daniel - Lion's den.
- Elijah - Years of isolation.

True prophets carry crosses before crowns.

## 10. Character Trait #10

### Spiritual Discernment

The prophet recognized unseen realities.

- Elisha - Saw heavenly armies.
- Daniel - Saw principalities.
- Ezekiel - Saw the glory departing.
- Isaiah - Saw the heavenly throne.

The prophetic ministry always discerns what natural eyes cannot.

## 11. Character Trait #11

### Hatred of Idolatry

This becomes one of the dominant themes.

- Elijah - Against Baal.
- Jeremiah - Against idols.
- Isaiah - Against false gods.
- Ezekiel - Against hidden abominations.

The prophet continually called God's people back to covenant fidelity.

## 12 Character Trait #12

### Covenant Loyalty

This may be the defining characteristic.

Every prophet functioned as God's covenant prosecutor.

They reminded Israel:

- Remember the covenant.
- Repent.
- Return.
- Receive restoration.

This theme connects directly with our previous study on the covenant necessity of judgment. The prophet announced judgment not because God delighted in punishment, but because covenant holiness required correction before restoration.

## **13. Character Trait #13**

### **Dependence Upon the Holy Spirit**

#### **Old Testament**

- "The Spirit of the LORD came upon..."

#### **New Testament**

- The Spirit permanently indwells believers.

The prophet is never self-powered.

## **14. Character Trait #14**

### **Love for Truth**

Every prophet opposed deception.

- Jeremiah confronted false prophets.
- Micaiah opposed four hundred false prophets.

- Ezekiel rebuked those who "whitewashed" the wall.
- Zechariah condemned lying visions.

This becomes even more important in the last days.

## 15. Character Trait #15

### Hope

Although prophets announced judgment, they always pointed beyond judgment.

- Isaiah → Messiah
- Jeremiah → New Covenant
- Ezekiel → New Heart
- Daniel → Everlasting Kingdom
- Zechariah → Coming King

The prophetic ministry always leaves room for redemption.

## Part 2 - The New Testament Prophet

A true New Testament prophet should display the same covenantal character.

Old Testament Prophet	New Testament Prophet
Called by God	Called by Christ
Filled with the Spirit	Indwelt and empowered by the Spirit
Speaks God's Word	Speaks under Scripture's authority
Calls to repentance	Calls to repentance
Intercedes	Intercedes
Walks in holiness	Walks in holiness

<b>Old Testament Prophet</b>	<b>New Testament Prophet</b>
Suffers rejection	Suffers rejection
Loves truth	Loves truth
Lives humbly	Lives humbly
Points to God's covenant	Points to Christ and the New Covenant

## **The Ultimate Pattern: Jesus**

The fullest expression of prophetic character is found in Jesus Christ, who is identified as the Prophet like Moses (see Deuteronomy 18:15–19 and its New Testament fulfillment). Every authentic prophet reflects His character:

- Complete submission to the Father
- Perfect holiness
- Compassion for sinners
- Courage before rulers
- Continuous intercession
- Zeal for God's house
- Absolute truthfulness
- Willingness to suffer
- Covenant faithfulness
- Hope through redemption

## **A Theological Thesis**

One overarching conclusion emerges from this study:

**In Scripture, the primary qualification for the prophetic ministry is not extraordinary revelation but extraordinary conformity to the character of God. The Old Testament prophets were formed by holiness before they were entrusted with proclamation, and the New Testament**

**affirms the same pattern. Genuine prophetic ministry is recognized not merely by supernatural gifts, but by humility, covenant fidelity, holiness, love for truth, sacrificial obedience, and Christlike character. Revelation authenticates the prophet's message, but character authenticates the prophet himself.**

## **Part 3 – Characteristics of False Prophets in the Bible**

One of the most striking observations in Scripture is that **the Bible spends as much time describing the character of false prophets as it does the character of true prophets.** God consistently warns His people that deception comes not merely through false doctrine, but through men and women whose lives reveal an entirely different spiritual nature.

### **1. Self-Appointed Rather Than God-Called**

False prophets assume an office God never gave them.

#### **Key Scriptures**

- Jeremiah 14:14
- Jeremiah 23:21
- Ezekiel 13:2–3

"I did not send the prophets, yet they ran."

#### **Character Trait**

- Ambitious
- Self-promoting

- Platform-driven
- Seeks recognition instead of divine commissioning

## 2. They Speak from Their Own Hearts

This is perhaps the defining characteristic.

### Jeremiah 23:16

"They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD."

### Ezekiel 13:2

"Who follow their own spirit."

Instead of hearing from God...

- They imagine.
- They speculate.
- They create.
- They market.

## 3. They Tell People What They Want to Hear

One repeated biblical pattern.

### Examples

- Hananiah - Promised quick deliverance.
- Four hundred prophets under Ahab - Promised victory.
- False prophets of Jeremiah's day - Promised peace.

Micah describes them as preaching according to what the audience desired.

## **Their message**

- Peace
- Prosperity
- Blessing
- Victory
- Comfort
- Without repentance.

## **4. They Reject Covenantal Holiness**

True prophets called Israel back to the covenant. False prophets removed the covenant requirements.

Jeremiah 6:14 - "Peace, peace..." when there was no peace.

**They healed symptoms. God wanted heart surgery.**

## **5. They Love Popularity**

- Unlike Elijah...
- Unlike Jeremiah...
- Unlike Micaiah...

False prophets usually had large followings. Popularity often became their validation.

**The true prophet often stood alone.**

## **6. They Seek Financial Gain**

One of Scripture's strongest warnings.

### Examples

- Balaam - Loved the wages of unrighteousness.
- Micah 3 - Prophets prophesied for money.
- Ezekiel 13 - Prophetesses hunted souls for handfuls of barley.

### **New Testament**

- Simon Magus - Wanted to purchase spiritual power.

The spirit of Balaam continues into the New Testament (2 Peter 2; Jude; Revelation 2).

## **7. They Lack the Fear of God**

- True prophets feared God.
- False prophets feared people.

This explains why they modified their message.

## **8. They Resist Correction**

Jeremiah repeatedly confronted them. They never repented. Instead, they opposed Jeremiah.

False prophets often attack true prophets.

## 9. They Produce Spiritual Confusion

**Jeremiah 23:14**

"They strengthen the hands of evildoers."

Instead of conviction, they create compromise.

## 10. Pride

One of the clearest characteristics. They present themselves as spiritual elites. Yet they refuse submission.

The prophetic gift becomes part of their identity rather than their stewardship.

## 11. Sensual Living

While not every false prophet is openly immoral, Scripture frequently connects false prophecy with moral compromise.

### **Examples**

- Balaam
- Jezebel
- Later New Testament warnings

**Truth and holiness are inseparable.**

## 12. They Mix Truth with Error

Satan rarely begins with total lies.

False prophets often speak 90% truth with 10% poison.

**This is why discernment is necessary.**

### **13. Signs Do Not Validate Them**

This is perhaps one of the most overlooked principles.

- According to Deuteronomy 13, a sign may occur...yet the prophet is still false if he leads people away from God.
- Jesus repeats this warning in Matthew 24.
- Paul echoes it in 2 Thessalonians 2.
- John reinforces it in 1 John 4.

Miracles are never the primary test. Character and doctrine are.

### **14. Comparison Chart**

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>True Prophet</b>	<b>False Prophet</b>
Calling	Called by God	Self-appointed
Authority	God's Word	Personal opinions and imagination
Message	Repentance and covenant faithfulness	Peace without repentance
Motivation	Please God	Please people
Character	Humble	Proud
Lifestyle	Holy	Compromising
Response to Correction	Teachable	Defensive
Relationship with Truth	Protects truth	Mixture of truth and error
Financial Motive	Serves sacrificially	Loves gain
View of Popularity	Accepts rejection	Seeks applause

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>True Prophet</b>	<b>False Prophet</b>
Spiritual Focus	God's glory	Personal influence
Relationship to Scripture	Submits to Scripture	Twists or ignores Scripture
Discernment	Exposes deception	Produces deception
Intercession	Bears the burdens of God's people	Exploits God's people
Fruit	Repentance, holiness, restoration	Confusion, compromise, bondage

## **Theological Summary**

The contrast between true and false prophets is fundamentally a contrast of **character before it is a contrast of gifting**. Both may claim visions, dreams, spiritual insight, or even supernatural manifestations. Yet, Scripture consistently teaches that the decisive tests are covenant fidelity, holiness, humility, submission to God's revealed Word, and the fruit produced in the lives of those who follow them.

A helpful way to summarize the biblical pattern is:

<b>True Prophet</b>	<b>False Prophet</b>
Seeks God's presence	Seeks man's praise
Carries God's burden	Carries his own agenda
Calls people to repentance	Calls people to comfort without repentance
Exalts Christ and God's covenant	Exalts self and personal influence

True Prophet	False Prophet
Speaks because God has spoken	Speaks because silence would cost influence
Will suffer for truth	Will compromise for acceptance

## A Significant Last-Days Observation

One of the sobering themes that runs from the Old Testament into the New Testament is that **false prophets almost always outnumber true prophets** during seasons of widespread apostasy. In the days of Micaiah there were four hundred prophets speaking to one faithful prophet (1 Kings 22). Jeremiah stood virtually alone against the prophetic establishment of Judah. Elijah confronted hundreds of prophets of Baal and Asherah (1 Kings 18). This recurring biblical pattern reinforces Jesus' warning that false prophets will arise in the last days and deceive many (Matthew 24:11, 24), making **character, covenant faithfulness, and doctrinal fidelity** the indispensable marks by which God's people must test every prophetic voice.