

Prophets

Messengers Series Part 3

nābā' [nava H5012] – This verb appears 115 times in the Bible and usually means "to prophesy." It always indicates that the message is from the Holy Spirit, and it is confirmed either openly or indirectly by a sign. It is God speaking through the individual, using the voice of the individual, to make His message known, followed by a sign to prove that it is from God.

nābîy' [navee, H5030] – In all but two of the 314 times this word occurs, it is the singular or plural noun for "prophet." Strong's Dictionary includes spokesman and speaker as alternative translations. Since this noun also designates false and heathen prophets, the context is essential to know which of the messages is from God. The apostle John said, "*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world*" (1 John 4:1). The true prophet, one who speaks the full and accurate word given by the Spirit, is chosen, commissioned, enlightened, and equipped by God as his spokesman or metaphorically, His "mouthpiece."

The test of a true prophet

We often hear a short statement like, "if the prophesy comes true, the prophet is truly from God," but in both the Old and New Testaments, there are warnings that must be observed. Consider the words of Moses to Israel from the Plains of Moab, just before Israel entered the promised land. "*If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul*" (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). The sign was there, or maybe it was a lucky guess, but the words are against or different from God's law and guidance. We need to disregard all teaching that does not agree with the Bible. There were, and still are, many that claim to be prophets, speaking for God. The internet is full of sites with persuasive arguments about their pseudo prophets and preachers being true messengers from God. But they teach something different than what the Bible says, and we must reject what they teach.

The whole message, nothing but the message

Sometimes, the prophets did not deliver the full message. In 1Kings 22, we read that King Jehoshaphat of Judah asked King Ahab of Israel to inquire of God about going to war. Ahab asked about 400 of his prophets. The 400 prophesied victory and urged Ahab to go to war. But Jehoshaphat asked if there might be another prophet to ask. Ahab kept Micaiah hidden because he told the truth that Ahab did not want to hear. Micaiah sarcastically said, "*Go up and succeed, and the LORD will give it into the hand of the king.*" Then the king said to him, "*How many times must I adjure you to speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?*" So he said, "*I saw all Israel Scattered on the mountains, Like sheep which have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each of them return to his house in peace'*" (1 Kings 22:15-17). The 400 did not tell Ahab that he would die in the battle.

Many times in the Old Testament books of history and prophets, the false and lying prophets told what the king wanted to hear and did not relate any "bad news." In most instances, the difference was between the schools of the prophets and the true prophet. We are told in 2 Kings 2, that Elijah went to heaven, carried by a whirlwind. It also gives an insight to the guild (called sons in some translations), or school of the prophets. Those young men that met Elisha knew some things, but not the whole story. They knew that the LORD would take Elijah away but did not know his replacement, Elisha, was chosen to be more powerful in many ways than Elijah. Through Elisha, God would subdue an army, heal leprosy, defeat toxins, and much more.

The chosen prophet, selected by God to carry a message, would tell the whole truth with nothing added. Jonah tried not to take the message but did after some miraculous persuasion. God's commission, given to the prophets, is recorded by Jerimiah. *"Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.'" Then I said, "Alas, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, Because I am a youth." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak. "Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you," declares the LORD"* (Jeremiah 1:4-8).