

# The Truth About Prophecy - Old Testament - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

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*Zac Poonen explores the nature of prophecy in the Old Testament, emphasizing the importance of holiness and a close relationship with God for true prophetic ministry.*

**Duration:** 57:37

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 10:6

**Topics:** "Old Testament Prophecy", "Discerning False Prophets"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the truth about prophecy, exploring the characteristics of prophets in the Old Testament and the importance of discerning true prophets from false ones. It emphasizes the need for a deep connection with God, a simple lifestyle, and a focus on holiness and repentance. The sermon also touches on the significance of music in prophesying and the dangers of false prophets seeking personal gain. It concludes with a reminder of God's predestined plan for each individual and the importance of being vigilant against deception.

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## Transcript

Today we want to continue our study in the subject that we started yesterday, the truth about prophecy. And we want to look at the Old Testament today. What we're going to do is we'll look at the New Testament tomorrow and then on the last day we'll have a time of questions and answers.

So if you remember what I said yesterday, in the Old Testament there were seven words that described the seven ministries that a prophet was supposed to have. Now the only reason we look at that is so that we get a background understanding of what the prophetic ministry was all about. Now it's very easy if you look up a concordance, you'll discover something that in the Old Testament, prophesying, the word prophesying is mentioned very little, but prophet comes very often.

But when you come to the New Testament, you hardly read the word prophet, especially after the Day of Pentecost where the New Covenant begins, but you read more about prophesying. And there are hardly any prophets mentioned in the New Testament. This is an amazing thing that you just need a concordance to discover that, but hundreds of them in the Old Testament.

So the emphasis in the New Testament is on prophesying and the ministry, but in the Old Testament it was the person of the prophet. Now whenever people have not understood the New Covenant, like most Christians have not understood the New Covenant at all, they tend to go back to the Old Testament for everything. One of the clearest proofs is that when Christians don't live a life of victory over sin, it's a clear proof that they are back under the Old Covenant because victory over sin was not promised under the Old Covenant, it's a New Covenant promise, it's just one example I could go to many others, but just that much is an introduction.

So we look at the Old Testament to provide us a background because in a sense it's these ministries that should characterize all of us to a greater or a lesser measure. We saw yesterday that the New Covenant promises that God will pour out his spirit on all mankind, that includes you and me. It's not on a special person here or a special person there.

My dear brothers and sisters, young brothers and sisters, you must seek God with all your heart that the spirit of God is poured out upon you. You'll never be able to serve God effectively with Bible knowledge, no matter how much you study the Bible, you can spend a hundred years studying the Bible, you will not be able to serve God if the spirit of God is not poured out upon you and you must claim this, that when the spirit of God is poured out, you, being a son and a daughter of God, will prophesy. So it's with that in the background that we study the subject, it's not theoretical, nothing in the Bible is meant to be theoretical, it's practical, intensely practical, so everything I say does not apply to some full-time workers or pastors or missionaries, but for every child of God in the new covenant.

So what were the seven ministries I mentioned yesterday? First, a prophet is a seer. That's mentioned in 1 Samuel 9 verse 18, he was one who could see, because God gave him discernment and we need that today, to see the dangers there are if we go in a particular direction, and a prophet needs to warn a church about that. And the second word we saw was a mystic or a man with vision, one who is a worshipper, who lives close to God, who sees the glory of God, and because he lives in God's presence, his spiritual faculties are sharpened to see and have vision concerning the future, and therefore he can direct God's people in the right direction.

So these first two words relate to a man's connection with God. And then the third word was a burden-bearer. Prophets carried a burden, a burden which God put upon their heart, and they stuck to that burden till the end of their life, and nobody could remove it.

And when God calls us also, he gives us a particular burden. The fourth word we saw was a herald, or one who proclaims something, and the fifth was one who is a spokesman or a mouthpiece of God. These two relate to speaking forth God's word, and then the last two we saw was a watchman who stands on the wall and watches for the enemy, and the last one was a shepherd.

So all these ministries were there in the ministry of a prophet to a greater or lesser extent, and as we seek to prophesy to a greater or lesser extent, these things must characterize all seven, must be found in us to some extent. It's not only a pastor who's a shepherd. Even a young 15-year-old wholehearted Christian can be a shepherd to a 7-year-old child.

So all these ministries can be found in us. Now we go to the study of the prophets and prophecy in the Old Testament, and I want to show you something that the first two people who prophesied in the Old Testament, the very first two, were Enoch and Noah. Now the prophecy of Enoch is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but it is mentioned in the book of Jude, in verse 14 and 15, where it says about Enoch

prophesying the second coming of Christ.

In Jude, verse 14 and 15, about Christ coming to judge sinners. So Enoch spoke about judgment upon the ungodly. Now it's very interesting to see this, that the first prophecy mentioned in Scripture by a man was a prophecy concerning Jude 15, judgment on the ungodly for all their ungodly deeds which they've done in their ungodly ways and the things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

So in Enoch's prophecy, four times he's speaking about ungodly people. Now that is generally speaking the emphasis of all the prophets in the Old Testament and the New Testament. They are hitting out against ungodliness and sin.

Please remember this. The second prophecy is from Noah concerning his son. You know the story where his son Ham came and spoke about his father lying naked and Noah made a prophecy there in Genesis 9 and verse 25 saying, cursed be Canaan, who was Ham's son, a servant of servants will he be to his brothers and blessed be the Lord of Shem and Japheth.

And that prophecy was literally fulfilled showing that Noah was also a prophet. Again notice this, the prophecy was concerning judgment against sin, the sin of a disrespectful attitude towards his father. So it's very interesting to see this.

The prophecy begins in the Old Testament with this warning to sinners not to play the fool with God but that God would judge them severely for sin. The other thing that we notice about both these men, Enoch and Noah, I don't know whether you've noticed it, that both of them walked with God. It says in Genesis 5 verse 24 that Enoch walked with God and it says in Genesis 6 verse 9 that Noah walked with God.

The first two people who prophesied and who were prophets in the Old Testament were also people who walked with God. Now that's also significant that prophecy comes out of a walk with God. This is how prophecy began in the Old Testament and that's how God intended that it should continue all the way through.

That's not unfortunately how it's gone. But if we want to come back to God's original pattern and plan for prophesying, remember it doesn't begin with predicting the future. No, it begins with walking with God.

Prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit and we can compare it to a vessel, say a beautiful glass, but the life which the prophet has as a result of his walk with God is what is inside the glass. So a person can have a fantastic gift of prophecy, it's like a beautiful glass and if he doesn't have life it's empty, there's no water in it, it doesn't satisfy the thirst of somebody who is needy, even though the glass is beautiful. And another person may not have such a fantastic gift of prophecy, but he's got water in the glass, he's got the life of Christ in him and that man can actually bless people more with an inferior gift of prophecy than the other person with a superior gift of prophecy but who doesn't walk with God.

So that's why these two things must always be balanced and that's why we see right at the beginning of scripture the two first prophets walking with God and prophesying. And if you want to do it God's way, that is the way. And that's what we should look for first of all in any person who calls himself a prophet.

Do I sense that this man is walking with God? Do I sense that this man is walking with Jesus Christ? Now how do we know? The more you walk with Christ the more you become like him. And that is the thing that we should look for. Now having said that we go to Genesis chapter 20 where we read about the first reference to the word prophet in the Bible and there it's God himself saying concerning Abraham, God

saying about Abraham, Abraham is a prophet.

Again what do we see? Abraham was a man of faith. He didn't predict the future but he was a prophet. So we see that a prophet does not necessarily have to predict the future but he could be a spokesman for God speaking forth God's word without necessarily predicting the future.

It's very important to see that. Abraham is called here a prophet. We go now to Exodus chapter 7 verse 1 where we read the second time the word prophet comes in the Bible and here is where we can really understand what prophet really means.

Because when we think of prophesying remember this applies to us according to Acts chapter 2 verse 17 and 18 if the spirit is poured upon us. Here is what it means to prophesy. Here is what it means to be a prophet.

It's interesting this is not referring to a prophet of God but a prophet of Moses. Exodus chapter 7 verse 1, the Lord said to Moses, I am going to make you like God to Pharaoh and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet and there we understand what the meaning of prophet is. You shall speak all that I command you, in other words he would tell Aaron and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh.

So you see a prophet is someone who is a spokesman for somebody else. Because Moses went up to God and said oh I can't speak God I don't have any ability he said that in chapter 4 and God said okay Aaron will be your prophet he will speak you tell him what to speak. So what is a prophet? A prophet is not necessarily somebody predicting the future.

It's a wrong understanding that a lot of people have that the only person who is a prophet is someone who predicts the future. It's someone who is speaking forth on behalf of somebody else and we will see that more when we come into the New Testament where there is very little of predicting the future. 99% of New Testament prophecy relates to speaking forth the word of God.

Telling people what God is saying not predicting the future. A lot of Old Testament prophecy was predicting the future concerning the coming of Christ concerning the judgment of the nations etc. But not all in fact the greatest prophet of all do you know who that was in the Old Testament period was John the Baptist he lived under the old covenant remember the new covenant began on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 and up until that time the greatest prophet Jesus himself said born of women was John the Baptist the greatest prophet of all time.

He did not predict one thing about the future but he spoke forth God's word and what was the message of the greatest prophet of all time John the Baptist repentance. You see that how in the Old Testament began with Enoch preaching to ungodly sinners to repent lest God judge them and ends with John the Baptist preaching repentance to sinners so that they can turn to him. The burden of the prophets throughout the Old Testament was holiness holiness holiness not prosperity prosperity was promised to the Israelites in the new old covenant it's not promised to the Christians in the new covenant but it was promised to the Israelites under the old covenant but it was contingent on their repenting and turning to God and the false prophets were the ones who offered Israel peace and prosperity without their being holy that's one of the ways we can distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet a true prophet emphasizes holiness repentance turning from sin God's judgment on ungodliness a false prophet emphasizes prosperity and doesn't really matter how you live God wants to bless you materially now it's right through the Old Testament and that's why if we see this clearly in the Old Testament we'll be protected from the

multitudes of false prophets that are roaming around in Christendom today.

Now let's turn to Numbers chapter 22 what I'm going to do is take you through the Old Testament and show you some of the important things in relation to prophecy that we find in the Old Testament in Numbers chapter 22 we read of another prophet and this is Balaam it's interesting Balaam was a prophet and if you read his prophecy in Numbers chapter 23 and 24 you know Balaam I told you yesterday predicted that the coming of Jesus Christ you read that in Numbers 24 17 a star will come from Jacob Balaam was a man who predicted the coming of Christ one of the first prophets in the Old Testament to predict the coming of Christ was a man who went after money so just because a man says something which is going to be fulfilled it does not mean he's a man who's accepted by God Isaiah predicted the

coming of Christ Balaam predicted the coming of Christ Isaiah went to heaven Balaam went to hell if you needed advice who would you go to Isaiah or Balaam there are Isaiah's and Balaam's in the world today be careful just because something happens everything that Balaam said about Israel was true but notice what it says about him in Numbers chapter 22 and verse 7 when Balak the king of Moab wanted Balaam to come and prophesy against Israel it says he sent the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian and notice this with the fees for divination divination is another word for witchcraft a lot of people who were involved in Old Testament prophesying the false prophets especially were very close closely linked with witchcraft they didn't know which spirit was operating on them you see it's not

just the Holy Spirit who knows about your past life the devil knows every detail about your past life he's got enough demons floating around the world to know the exact details of someone's past life so someone possessed with a demon could tell you every detail about your past life not knowing anything about you and you'd think that man is a prophet he's not a prophet he could be possessed by with a demon in fact some years ago I read in the newspaper about a small baby born somewhere in North India and when she began to speak she spoke speaking about her past life as an old lady who died some in some other part of India the same day when she was born and there were people who she was a Hindu girl and they said this is the proof of reincarnation that when a soul dies it's born back into

the world and I said here they said here is the proof this little girl says every little detail about a thousand miles away where some old lady who died in the 80s when she was over 80 years old every little detail of that life now a person who doesn't know about demons and about the devil would be absolutely surprised and that sounds like a real proof of reincarnation I mean as soon as I read it I knew that's just a demon a demon got into that girl and knowing all the details of that other person's life describes it now I'm surprised that Christians are fooled by this type of people coming forth and saying something about your past or some detail about your life and you wonder how in the world did that person know don't imagine that that's always from God so that's just a warning

divination the point I want you to notice here is King knew that if I want to get Balaam to prophesy I've got to give him money notice how money comes in straight away right at the beginning of the Bible with false prophets that's why I told you yesterday it's by a person's attitude to money that you discover whether he's a true prophet or not it's a it's a fundamental point and that's why the early apostles warned people that if a man is interested in money he can never be a true prophet of God I have followed that rule literally totally and I have never once in my life been deceived or disappointed it's absolutely true because Jesus said there are only two masters in the world Luke 16 13 God and money a true prophet serves God a false prophet is interested in money and haven't you seen

pastors and prophets claiming to be Christians quoting the Bible interested in money I'm amazed that people who read the Bible can be fooled by such people remember Balaam prophesied everything correctly including the coming of Christ but he wanted a salary for his services and the king knew that and when he didn't come first the king knew well if I offer him a higher salary he will come and he went with more money and that's exactly how a lot of people Christian organizations are drawing people well I'll offer you a higher salary if you don't come for the salary I offered where did it start Balaam is the first example of it in the Old Testament and he was a false prophet that's not Christianity Jesus didn't offer a salary to Peter and Paul and Peter and James and John when he called him

to serve him there's tremendous amount of deception but if you can keep this one thing in mind is this guy interested in money then he's a false prophet as far as I'm concerned I would write him off immediately as a false prophet so we see they recognize that in fact in the Old Testament we read another example in the book of Judges chapter 17 where a man wanted a priest and he said come and be a priest in my house and I'll give you so much salary I'll give you a change of clothes and and the guy came then examples of this in the Old Testament and in the New Testament Balaam is mentioned a number of times Peter says in 2nd Peter 2 15 about the madness of Balaam what is the madness of Balaam this man who prophesied about the coming of Christ his madness was that he ran after money and it

also says at 2nd Peter 2 verse 15 and 16 in the book of Jude if we read about the error of Balaam in Revelation chapter 2 verse 14 we read about the doctrine of Balaam so we see Balaam is mentioned in the New Testament as a warning to New Testament people who seek to prophesy yes you can prophesy when the Spirit comes upon you but remember Balaam and don't become spiritually mad like he was now we go to Deuteronomy chapter 13 in Deuteronomy chapter 13 and verse 2 let's start with verse 1 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 now you see as soon as that happens a sign or a wonder comes true most Christians would immediately swallow it provided the man calls himself a Christian now this is not talking

about some heathen religion it says here arises among you that means there's a man there who accepts the law of Moses he was an Israelite worshiping the true God and he speaks of a sign and a wonder now if a non-christian man did it we would all reject him but what if a Christian came and did a miracle in the name of Jesus prophesied in the name of Jesus this is referring to such a case and gives you a sign or a wonder and the sign or the wonder comes true concerning which he spoke to you but he says let us go after other gods and let us serve them you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams I told you there are only two gods God and money so when you have a prophet arising among you saying something and it works it his sign comes true or the miracle takes

place or the words he speaks comes true and then you find he's interested in money or he tells you how you can make more money how you can get a better car or a better house or that's another God that's not what Jesus came Jesus came to lead us to worship the true and living God our Father in heaven but when he leads you in another direction remember always this what Jesus said there are only two masters in the world Luke 16 13 God and money nobody will ask you to serve the devil Jesus did not say the two masters were God and Satan that's the mistake we make and that's why we go astray Babylon that you read off in the Old Testament you read chapter 17 and chapter 18 of Revelation together you find that Babylon is not serving the devil Babylon is an economic religious system chapter 18 is

describing Babylon as an economic system and 17 as a religious system is the combination of the two is the combination of Christianity plus money that produces Babylon Jerusalem that's why Babylon is called

great 11 times in the book of Revelation and Jerusalem is called holy the true church is holy it's not rich it's holy and that's primary characteristic of true Christianity so here we see a prophet leads us to be interested in materialism in material things and how we can get this and how we can get that and the devil knows that everybody in the world loves money unless Jesus delivers us from it you shall not listen to the words of that prophet how many Christians obey that why does God allow such a false prophet to come into the midst of his people listen to this this is the verse

that tells us why God permits it it's exactly like the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden why did God place that tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden you know the answer to test Adam even Jesus needed to be tested in the wilderness how much more you and I do you know how God he tests us through many ways one of the ways he tests Christians today and he tested the Israelites in the Old Testament was by allowing false prophets to come into their midst to see what are these people really interested in are they interested in me or they interested in money and so the false prophet comes and it says here in verse 3 the Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul or whether you love

the Lord your God in a little corner of your heart and most of your heart is interested in a comfortable life and in money and things like that I tell you there's nobody who can find that out in your life like a false prophet he comes along and he prophesies some material gain for you and God immediately finds out the condition of your heart so there we are told Christianity is a supernatural religion I believe that we have to experience supernatural answers to prayer in our life particularly after we are filled with the Holy Spirit we enter the realm of the supernatural but everything supernatural is not from God please remember that and here is an example where it is shown that the miraculous is often used by God to test his people people who come in the name of Jesus can do miracles

but they may be workers of iniquity as I said yesterday now we go to Deuteronomy chapter 18 and verse this is speaking about a true prophet in verse 20 and 22 the who shall speak a word presumptuously in my name which I have not commanded him to speak or which you shall speak in the name of other gods that prophet shall die a prophet may speak in the name of Jehovah or Yahweh in the name of the Lord but if he speaks what the Lord has not told him to speak it was such a serious sin in the Old Testament that the prophet had to be killed you couldn't play the fool you couldn't say well I think what I'm saying is from the Lord there are a whole lot of people today trying to learn how to prophesy there are a lot of people going around teaching people how to prophesy I heard recently of a

meeting where people sit together and they are told whatever comes into your mind just say it that's a prophecy imagine if you were in the Old Testament they'd kill you it's a good thing you're not in the Old Testament it says imagine if a prophet presumptuously seeks to speak in my name saying thus said the Lord and you say whatever comes into your mind according to that Old Testament law you've got to be killed you know the trouble today is God's people don't fear him I don't believe in saying that said the Lord unless it's a word from Scripture that I can say that said the Lord believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you will be saved sure we can be absolutely clear when we are quoting Scripture which is the word of God but if you are presumptuous to say something which God Almighty has not

commanded you to say my brother sister you better be careful we're supposed to fear God in the New Covenant more than in the Old Covenant why because we have a greater revelation of God in Christ than they had in the Old Covenant and so here is something that should bring a real fear into our heart about presuming to speak something in the New Testament the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 7

number of places he says concerning this matter I have no commandment from the Lord but I give my opinion and at the end of the chapter in the last verse of 1 Corinthians 7 he says I think I have the Spirit of God I would any day trust such a man then all these multitudes of people going around saying that said the Lord humbugs be careful don't be deceived the other thing we read about a

prophet here is verse 22 you may say in your heart verse 21 how shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken how do we know whether this man this is a very real question a lot of people have today how do I know whether this man is from the Lord or not okay here's the answer when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord if the thing does not come about or come true that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken the prophet has spoken it presumptuously you shall not be afraid of him now you know what that means in practical terms now if I say it's gonna rain tomorrow that doesn't make me a prophet I hope you know that or if I say there'll be sunshine day after tomorrow that doesn't make me a prophet just because the sun shined I mean there's a high degree of probability that might

rain tomorrow it may shine sun may shine day after tomorrow so you know we got to be not be deceived by people who say generalized things like that but the meaning of this is if a man says a hundred things in the name of the Lord and if one of them does not come to pass he's a false prophet you got it if one out of the hundred things he said did not come to pass as far as I'm concerned he's a totally false prophet why do I say that every true prophet in the Old Testament they said so many things and said think of the things they said concerning Jesus Christ the prophecies every one of them was fulfilled right down to the last detail there's not a single thing that was not fulfilled there are verses in the Bible that say that not one thing which the Lord promised was not fulfilled Moses

was a true prophet Isaiah was a true prophet every single jot and tittle of everything they said was fulfilled that's the mark of a true prophet please remember that I'm absolutely amazed at the number of Christians who either have not studied the Bible or they have no respect for the Bible who just swallow what people say and imagine that people who say things which are not fulfilled are still true prophets of God be careful about what you say you know we can't afford to be in error in prophecy it's not like the gift of healing in the gift of healing if you pray for a hundred people and one of them only is healed like in many many people with healing ministries they pray for a hundred people percentage success rate is about 1% one person is healed okay but he has not done any harm to the

other 99% I mean they didn't get more sick after he prayed for them okay he prayed for a hundred people one person was healed but thank God at least one person was healed 99% were not healed but think of prophecy supposing a man goes around prophesying to a hundred people now that said the Lord you must marry so-and-so or thus said the Lord you must leave your job and go here or thus said the Lord this is what the Lord is supposed to and a hundred cases 99 times he's wrong can you imagine the confusion and chaos and destruction he has brought into 99% of people it's not in the same category as healing in prophecy you've got to be what the success rate has got to be 100% it's very very important and that's why in the beginning I would say stick to the word of God I'm amazed that so many

people who want to prophesy I don't read the Bible carefully how in the world can you prophesy if you don't read the scriptures here is something which is definitely God's Word okay we move on to 1 Samuel chapter 3 here we read of Samuel as a little boy you know it's amazing than the Old Testament there were little boys who were prophets there were farmers there were kings all types of people and prophets and here we read that in those days 1 Samuel 3 1 the word from the Lord was rare and visions were visions of God were infrequent that means there was no man who was living close enough to God who was

interested in God it says in the book of Judges there was no king in Israel everybody did what was right in his own eyes but in the midst of it there was this little boy grew up who had a at

a very young age he began to have a hunger for God and the Lord spoke to him and he said speak Lord your servant is listening speak Lord your servant is listening 1 Samuel 3 9 this is the attitude of a true prophet he lives before God's face every day and he's listening listening listening listening it says about Jesus and Isaiah 50 verse 4 the Lord God has opened my ear to listen to listen to listen every morning every day God woke him up to listen this is how a true prophet must be listening and then he says because I got a word from my father Isaiah 50 verse 4 I could give a word to the weary person who came across my path that day who needed that word you know what a tremendous privilege it is to prophesy like this who knows that tomorrow some weary person and the world is full of

weary people may come to you you may never stand in a pulpit in all your life but some weary person may come to you and if you have had the habit of listening listening listening you can be a one who prophesies you may not be a prophet or a prophetess but you can prophesy to that person what does that mean like Aaron spoke what Moses told him that's what the Hebrew Nabi which is used in our some Indian languages to prophet speaks forth what God spoke to you and that's exactly the word that he needs to encourage him and lift his spirit I believe all of us can develop this habit and if you allow the Spirit of God to rest upon us and fill us we can prophesy almost every day of our life okay so we read here of Samuel and one amazing word I remember this word challenged me tremendously when I

was a young man in my early 20s and I started preaching God's Word and I read this verse in 1 Samuel 3 19 where it says Samuel grew and the Lord was with him this is the mark of a person who is listening to God God is with him and God did not allow any of Samuel's words to fall to the ground that means if Samuel spoke 25 words in a sentence to somebody 25 words what's that one sentence all 25 words went straight home to the person's heart my brothers and sisters that's how we should speak let your conversation be always with grace that you know Colossians 4 6 that you know exactly how to give an answer to everyone who comes to you I believe that's how we should preach from the pulpit where not a single word is wasted every word goes straight home to people's hearts whether you speak for 5

minutes or 50 minutes that it must go home to people's hearts we must seek to prophesy like that in personal conversation in the pulpit everywhere because in this new covenant age God's sons and daughters are called to prophesy make this your goal I want to show you another verse in chapter 9 chapter 9 and verse here we read about Saul looking for his donkeys and he couldn't find them then his servant said we read here in verse 6 he said to him behold now there's a man of God in this city and he's referring to Samuel he said let's go to Samuel and he'll probably tell us where the donkeys are and then Saul said in verse 7 how can we go and see this man of God because verse 7 last part we don't have any gifts to give him see this was the concept people had in the mind if I go to a prophet I

must give him money if a pastor comes to my house I must have my envelope ready with some money inside to give it to him this is Balaam this is all the doctrine of Balaam don't be deceived by it anyway he said okay we'll take something and go to him and notice what happened when they went with this gift there's no record that Samuel ever took this gift from Saul but when Samuel came when Saul met Samuel anointed him we read there and then what did Samuel do it says here Samuel gave him a gift he said in verse 23 bring the portion which I said to you to set aside and the king took up the big leg which is there and set it before Saul and said here this is reserved for you I have come to give you a gift this is how these Old Testament prophets were they gave a gift to the person whom they

served you read how Elisha when Naaman wanted to give him a gift Elisha said no I don't want any gift from you the attitude to money and to gifts identified the true men of God in these Old Testament times and that's a very very important principle to bear in mind now another example I want to show you is concerning musical ministry in prophecy in 2nd Kings chapter 3 when Elisha was called by the king to prophesy concerning a difficult situation they were facing in relation to the enemy Elisha said bring me a minstrel 2nd Kings 3 15 and it says when the minstrel played the hand of the Lord came upon him there we see the tremendous power of spiritual music there is music which is worldly which has also come into the church and there is music which lifts the congregation into the presence

of God and a man who stands there and has to prophesy gets a word from the Lord this has happened to me numerous times I cannot even count the number of times where spiritually inspired music has lifted me into the presence of God and given me a word for his people and I want to show you another verse in 1 Chronicles chapter 25 in this connection so that people who have the gift of music need not feel that prophesy is only through speaking 1 Chronicles chapter 25 verse 1 it says David and the commanders of the army set apart for the service of God some of the sons of Esau who wrote some of the Psalms and Heman who were to prophesy with lyres and harps and cymbals now how do you prophesy with guitars and musical instruments it's amazing that's how they were to prophesy they were to sing

prophecies encouraging God's people so it's not just you know talking about the future there's a lovely verse in 1 Samuel chapter 10 which I often quote to people as a word which can happen to you in this new covenant age in its fuller fulfillment when the Spirit of God comes upon you 1 Samuel 10 verse 6 it says the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily Samuel told Saul and you will prophesy that means you'll have a gift to serve God and secondly you will be changed into another man your whole outlook on life will become different the things of eternity will become more important to you than the things of time this is what the baptism in the Holy Spirit does and then thirdly verse 7 God will be with you so when the Spirit of God comes upon me his purpose is to change me into

another man his purpose is that God's presence will be with me and then I prophesy now I want to show you an example of how the same King Saul who had that experience see what happened to him later on in life when he backslid at that time the Spirit of God came upon him he began to prophesy God was with him he was changed into another man but years later you read in 1 Samuel chapter 19 the same book 1 Samuel chapter 19 and verse 23 and 24 Saul is in a very backslidden state now and evil spirit has gone into him but he still prophesies and it says here that Saul went in 1 Samuel 19 23 and the Spirit of God came upon him and he went along prophesying and he stripped off this is King Saul stripped off his clothes verse 24 and he lay down naked all day and all night you know it's possible for

a man to have a gift and not have grace a gift that God gave him at a time when he was walking with God but which he loses when he stops walking with God and the number one example of that is Satan you know that Satan has got supernatural gifts when did he get it definitely not after he became Satan he got it when he was a pure angel God gave him certain supernatural abilities but at that time he also had the anointing and grace when he fell away from God he lost the anointing he lost the grace but he still had the gifts you need to distinguish between gifts and anointing Jesus had anointing and supernatural gifts and grace Satan has supernatural gifts but no anointing no grace here we see Saul an example of that a man who once had grace not grace but God walked with him and now he's

still prophesying and doing stupid things like taking off his clothes and lying down naked proving that God was not with him at all the Old Testament prophets were people who lived before God's face like Elijah

said I stand before God some of them had miraculous power like Elijah Elisha some of them never did a single miracle we read in John's Gospel in chapter 10 and verse 41 that John the Baptist the greatest prophet of the entire Old Covenant period John 10 verse 41 says he did not do a single miracle is it possible that there can be a prophet who never does a miracle in his whole life well the greatest prophet of Old Testament times greater than Moses greater than Elijah greater than Elisha never did a miracle all he did was preach repentance Jesus had discernment to know that a man

who preached repentance was greater than a man who did miracles the question is whether you and I have that discernment that's why Jesus called John the Baptist the man who never did a miracle the greatest prophet of Old Testament times but there was one thing characteristic of all prophets true prophets they had a very simple lifestyle whether it was Elisha or Elijah or John the Baptist or anyone or Jesus himself or Paul or Peter one thing that was characteristic of all the prophets in Old Testament and New Testament their lifestyle was very simple concerning food concerning clothing they knew how to fast it's not that they didn't enjoy a good meal but then they were not slaves to food they were not slaves to particular type of clothing they were not slaves to comfort they lived

disciplined lives that is God's will for every one of us if we want to be effective in God's service so that's something else that we must bear in mind then I want to show you some of the another verse in Jeremiah which shows us something which we can understand in the New Covenant to Jeremiah chapter 1 verse 5 the Lord said to Jeremiah before you were born I appointed you a prophet do all of you know that before you were born God knew that one day many years later you would accept Christ and what you would do whether you would surrender everything to him or whether you'd be half-hearted like many other Christians God knew that and if he saw that you would love him with all his heart all your heart and you would be a student of his word and you would give yourself to him completely he

would have a plan for your life in Jeremiah's case it was to be a prophet in Paul's case was to be an apostle but it's a tremendous encouragement to know that God the gift that God has for me in the body of Christ is not something he decides on after I'm grown up before I was conceived in my mother's womb God had a plan for me the Bible it says Ephesians before the foundation of the world it's a wonderful thing to know that so you just need to enter into that I'll tell you what is God's plan for all of you that the Holy Spirit should be poured out upon you on all mankind on all those who will be open so that we can prophesy we can speak forth what God wants us to speak forth just one or two things more before I close there are a number of examples in the New Testament where we read about

I'll just show you one of them about false prophets who would preach according to whether people gave them money or not Micah in the Old Testament Micah chapter 3 verse 5 thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray when they are given something to eat they say peace upon you God bless you but those who don't put anything in their mouths they declare holy war have you met prophets like that like another paraphrase says those who give them something to eat they say God bless you and if don't give them something they said God damn you so we see if you read through the Old Testament and these passages there are some wonderful passages let me suggest you two passages in the Old Testament that particularly speak about true prophets and oldest and false prophets Jeremiah

chapter 23 I don't have time to go through it in detail but that's a chapter really worth reading and Ezekiel chapter 13 Jeremiah chapter 23 and Ezekiel chapter 13 where we read about how prophets committed adultery how does a prophet commit adultery by getting power over a woman through his preaching and the woman begins to admire this great man of God who's preaching so powerfully and then this prophet

begins to realize that this woman is admiring him and he begins to get close to her and maybe goes to her and says I've got a prophecy for you and it ends up in it ends up in adultery you read there about Old Testament prophets who did that in Jeremiah 23 in fact the Lord says you prophets are committing adultery your prophets are running after money it's all there in the Old Testament so

that's why I say be careful be careful about a man who is not preaching holiness who's not preaching repentance be careful about someone who wants to get close to you physically or sexually sisters be extremely careful there are many many false prophets who go around telling you that they've got private prophecies for you and all they want to do is take advantage over you take advantage of you and grab something from you in Zephaniah chapter 3 verse 4 that's the last verse I'll read Zephaniah chapter 3 verse 4 there's a new paraphrase of the Bible called the message Bible and if that translates Zephaniah chapter 3 verse 4 like this these prophets are opportunists who are out for what they can get from you be careful of prophets who are opportunists who are out to see what they can get

from you it could be money it could be sex usually one of these two things or some power over you be careful these are these are not new this is not something that is new to Christendom today it's all there in the Old Testament we could go through a study of this for many hours but we don't have time be warned God has given us his word to guide us and protect us he who has ears to hear let him hear let's pray Heavenly Father I think of the amount of deception going on in Christendom today thank you for the light of your word that is so clear and bright that can protect all those who want to be protected it gives us light on that which is true and that which is false we pray that we shall be protected ourselves and we shall be able to give that light to others and others may be protected

too pray in Jesus name

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