

NON-PROPHET CHRISTIANITY

- This message is PREVENTATIVE, not CORRECTIVE. It is given to PREMPT a problem, not to deal with one that currently exists.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 (KJV) ¹⁹Quench not the Spirit. ²⁰Despise not prophesyings. ²¹Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 (NLT) ¹⁹ Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Do not scoff at prophecies, ²¹ but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good.

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 (AMP) ¹⁹ Do not quench (suppress or subdue) the [Holy] Spirit; ²⁰ Do not spurn the gifts and utterances of the prophets [do not depreciate prophetic revelations nor despise inspired instruction or exhortation or warning]. ²¹ But test and prove all things [until you can recognize] what is good; [to that] hold fast.

- We have been so afraid of despising prophecy that many times we neglect to judge prophecy – but Scripture commands us to do both!

1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

WHAT IS A PROPHET?

- The first mention of the word “prophet” in Scripture is a reference to Abraham found in Genesis 20:7 (“he is a prophet”). We don’t think of Abraham as a prophet because he didn’t foretell future events; this immediately exposes a misconception we have about prophets!
- The second mention of the word “prophet” in Scripture is a reference to Aaron found in Exodus 7:1 (“Aaron your brother shall be your prophet”). His “job description” was given in Exodus 4:16 ...

Exodus 4:16 And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.

- A prophet is not merely a foreteller of the future; **a prophet is one who speaks for another** (in this case, God).
- **False prophecy** is a misuse of the Lord’s name, which is a violation of the third commandment. It is serious business to God and His church!

- There is a lot of pressure today on ministers to avoid controversial issues and make people feel comfortable. But the Bible says that preachers are to both TEACH and WARN. Teaching establishes us; a warning admonishes us. Teaching edifies us; a warning fortifies us! If we are only taught and never warned, we will lose what was established through teaching, no matter how great the teaching is.

Colossians 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

- **YOUR PASTOR SERVES AS A PROPHET TO YOU; HE SPEAKS THE WORD OF GOD INTO YOUR LIFE!**
- The anointing that will rest on God’s servants just prior to His second coming is like the ministry of Elijah; its thrust will not be to entertain or merely encourage, but to turn the people back to God in repentance!

Malachi 4:5-6 ⁵Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: ⁶And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Matthew 17:11-13 ¹¹And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. ¹²But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. ¹³Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

- Notice that Jesus says “**Elias is come already**” – that’s John the Baptist, who was already beheaded at this point. But He also says “**Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things**” – that’s an anointed group of leaders (Ephesians 4:7-11) who speak for God just prior to His second coming, to prepare the hearts of the people! The heartbeat of ALL the prophets in Scripture is: “Return to the Lord!”

2 Kings 17:13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

- “But I thought the ministry of the Pastor was to COMFORT the church!” Maybe your idea of “comfort” needs to be brought in line with the Bible! Isaiah described even John’s confrontational preaching as comfort!

Isaiah 40:1-5 (NLT) ¹ “Comfort, comfort my people,” says your God. ² “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem. Tell her that her sad days are gone and that her sins are pardoned. Yes, the LORD has punished her in full for all her sins.” ³ Listen! I hear the voice of someone shouting, “Make a highway for the LORD through the wilderness. Make a straight, smooth road through the desert for our God. ⁴ Fill the valleys and level the hills. Straighten out the curves and smooth off the rough spots. ⁵ Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together. The LORD has spoken!”

- The common problem among modern Christians is that they want an **EASIER WAY** to serve God. This causes them many times to reject Biblical preaching as **TOO HARSH**, and to embrace the words of false prophets because they pander to what the flesh wants to hear.

Ezekiel 13:1-7 (CEV) ¹The LORD said: ² Ezekiel, son of man, condemn the prophets of Israel who say they speak in my name, but **who preach messages that come from their own imagination**. Tell them it’s time to hear my message. ³ I, the LORD God, say those lying prophets are doomed! They don’t see visions—they make up their own messages! ⁴ Israel’s prophets are no better than jackals that hunt for food among the ruins of a city. ⁵ **They don’t warn the people about coming trouble or tell them how dangerous it is to sin against me.** ⁶ Those prophets lie by claiming they speak for me, but I have not even chosen them to be my prophets. And they still think their words will come true. ⁷ They say they’re preaching my messages, but they are full of lies—I did not speak to them!

Jeremiah 23:21-22 (NLT) ²¹ I have not sent these prophets, yet they claim to speak for me. I have given them no message, yet they prophesy. ²² If they had listened to me, they would have spoken my words and turned my people from their evil ways.

Ezekiel 13:10-12 (NLT) ¹⁰ “These evil prophets deceive my people by saying, ‘All is peaceful!’ when there is no peace at all! It’s as if the people have built a flimsy wall, and these prophets are trying to hold it together by covering it with whitewash! ¹¹ Tell these whitewashers that their wall will soon fall down. A heavy rainstorm will undermine it; great hailstones and mighty winds will knock it down. ¹² And when the wall falls, the people will cry out, ‘Where is the whitewash you applied?’

- We need a solid wall of conviction between the church and the world!

- The Bible teaches that the problem with false prophets is not just with ministers. Jesus described them as “wolves in SHEEP’S clothing” not “wolves in SHEPHERD’S clothing.”

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

- Paul also said that people with false messages could arise from AMONG the saints themselves!

Acts 20:29-30 ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

- False prophets resemble the believers. They can talk, teach, preach, sing or act just like them. But their desire or motivation is entirely different. True sheep delight in fulfilling the desires of their shepherd, but wolves think only of themselves. **If obedience does not interfere with the fulfillment of their own agenda, they will temporarily submit; this makes it difficult at times to distinguish them.**
- That is why Jesus said that they can only be identified by their FRUIT. True fruit remains constant through adverse circumstances and brings health and life to others. False prophets are those who have yet to SUBMIT their lives to the lordship of Jesus. They have sought God for the wrong reasons – they serve Him for what they can get from Him rather than for who He is! They not only deceive others, but they also deceive themselves.

2 Timothy 3:13 (NLT) But evil people and impostors will flourish. They will go on deceiving others, and they themselves will be deceived.

Matthew 7:20-23 ²⁰Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. ²¹Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

- **HOW CAN WE KNOW IF A PROPHECY IS TRUE OR NOT?** Is its truth determined only by its accuracy? No, because even false prophets can make incredibly accurate statements. The truth of a prophecy is only determined by its **ultimate fruit** – only if it has the effect of causing the recipient to walk according to the commandments of God's Word over a period of time is it a true prophecy!

Psalm 19:8-11 ⁸The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. ¹¹Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

- **False prophecy works in the opposite way – rather than making us content to follow God's commandments, it speaks to the idols in our hearts and makes us covet an easier way!**
- **IDOLATRY IS BIBLICALLY DEFINED AS "COVETOUSNESS," WHICH IS A HEART SEEKING SATISFACTION OUTSIDE OF GOD.**

Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and **covetousness, which is idolatry:**

- Such people normally seek out preachers that "tickle their ears" and tell them what they want to hear. But even when they do hear a real prophetic message from an anointed preacher, the idols in their heart cause them to hear **WHAT THEY WANT TO HEAR!**

2 Timothy 4:3 (AMP) For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, **chosen to satisfy their own liking** and to foster the errors they hold.

Ezekiel 14:2-4 ²And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, ³Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them? ⁴Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh **according to the multitude of his idols;**

- What happens to these people is that their DISCONTENTMENT gives birth to a DESIRE for what they think they lack; it is not a NEED, but just a WANT or a LUST. They read into every message a "prophetic word" from God that will provide their desire and allow their life to be easier! Most times, they don't even hear what the preacher is really saying! They only like sermons that say what they want to hear!

Jeremiah 23:16-17 (NLT) ¹⁶ This is my warning to my people," says the LORD Almighty. "Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you, filling you with **futile hopes**. They are making up everything they say. They do not speak for the LORD! ¹⁷ They keep saying to these rebels who despise my word, 'Don't worry! The LORD says you will have peace!' And to those who stubbornly follow their own evil desires, they say, 'No harm will come your way!'

Lamentations 2:14 (NLT) Your "prophets" have said so many foolish things, false to the core. They did not try to hold you back from exile by **pointing out your sins**. Instead, they painted false pictures, filling you with **false hope**.

- Only a real disciple of Jesus rejects what would bring immediate happiness and comfort to embrace what is difficult. The life of a believer is not always "easy" – and those that want to make it so can easily be led into rebellion and error.

Hebrews 11:25-26 (CEV) ²⁵ [Moses] chose to be mistreated with God's people instead of having the good time that sin could bring for a little while. ²⁶ Moses knew that the treasures of Egypt were not as wonderful as what he would receive from suffering for the Messiah, and he looked forward to his reward.

Acts 14:22b (NLT) They encouraged [the believers] to continue in the faith, reminding them that they must enter into the Kingdom of God through many tribulations.

Philippians 1:29 (NLT) For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for him.

2 Corinthians 12:10 (CEV) Yes, I am glad to be weak or insulted or mistreated or to have troubles and sufferings, if it is for Christ. Because when I am weak, I am strong.

- When a "prophetic message" offers an easier way to serve God, that is a sure sign that you need to reject it as false!

Romans 16:17-18 ¹⁷Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. ¹⁸For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Deuteronomy 13:1-4 (NLT) ¹ Suppose there are prophets among you, or those who have dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, ² and the predicted signs or miracles take place. If the prophets then say, 'Come, let us worship the gods of foreign nations,' ³ do not listen to them. The LORD your God is testing you to see if you love him with all your heart and soul. ⁴ Serve only the LORD your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him.

- **A false prophet is someone who comes in God's name, but with his own agenda.**

2 Peter 2:2-3a (AMP) ² And many will follow their immoral ways and lascivious doing; because of them the true Way will be maligned and defamed. ³ And in their covetousness (lust, greed) they will exploit you with (cunning) false arguments.

HOW CAN I AVOID BEING DECEIVED?

1. Stay in tune with your local church and your pastor.

Proverbs 18:1 (NKJV) A man who **isolates** himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment.

2. Don't allow offences to build up in your heart.

Matthew 24:10-11 ¹⁰And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

3. Develop a love for the truth!

2 Thessalonians 10:12 ¹⁰And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹²That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

3 John 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.