

A Roles of the prophets in the New Testament

- ❖ In the New Testament, prophecy is presented as a gift of the Holy Spirit, which was poured out abundantly (Rom. 12:6). In a single church there could be so many prophets that they had to take turns speaking (1 Cor. 14:29-31).
- ❖ What roles did these prophets play? (Rev. 19:10; 1:1; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:3; Acts 15:32).
 - To bear witness to Jesus. Their main mission was to lead people to Jesus.
 - To predict the future. They revealed events that extended even to our own time.
 - To build. To construct a strong church that can withstand the attacks of the enemy.
 - To exhort. To declare sin, so that people may repent.
 - To comfort. Judas and Silas were sent to the churches for this specific purpose.

B New Testament Prophets:

❖ Jesus, the prophesied prophet

- Jesus was considered a prophet by his contemporaries (Mt. 21:11; Mk. 6:15; Lk. 7:16; Jn. 6:14). He himself attributed this title to himself (Mr. 6:4; Lk. 13:33).
- Peter specified that Jesus was the Prophet/Messiah announced by Moses and the other prophets (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:18-26).
- But Jesus did not write the Word of God, but He is THE WORD (John 1:1). He is not just “a light that shines in a dark place,” as the other prophets were, but He is THE LIGHT (2P. 1:19; Jn. 1:9; 8:12).
- His work goes beyond that of any prophet. Jesus is the only one who can offer eternity to all of us by virtue of his life, death, and resurrection.

❖ The apostles and the prophets

- The apostles and prophets of the New Testament have common characteristics:
 - (1) They are people sent by God (Lk. 11:49)
 - (2) They receive gifts to lead the church (1 Cor. 12:28-29; Eph. 4:11-12)
 - (3) They are the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20)
 - (4) They receive revelations (Eph. 3:5)
 - (5) They rejoice in justice (Rev. 18:20)
- When mentioned together, the apostles precede the prophets (except in Luke 11:49). Peter equates the apostles with the ancient prophets (2 Peter 3:2).
- The apostles were specially commissioned to be witnesses of the resurrection by Jesus himself (Acts 10:40-41).
- The New Testament mentions several prophets, some by name: Barnabas (apostle), Simon, Lucius, Manaen, Saul (apostle), Judas, Silas, and Agabus (Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 19:6-7; 21:10).

❖ Prophetesses.

- The only prophetess mentioned by name in the New Testament is Anna, who “spoke about the child [Jesus] to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:36-38 NVI).
- The four daughters of Philip the evangelist also received the gift of prophecy (Acts 21:8-9).
- Furthermore, prophecy is mentioned as a common gift, both in women and in men (1 Cor. 11:4-5).
- Joel announced beforehand that the Holy Spirit would work so that sons, daughters, old men, young men, servants, and maidservants would prophesy (Joel 2:28-29).

❖ Paul's co-workers

- In addition to apostles, prophets, and prophetesses, some of Paul's helpers are mentioned who, like Silas and Barnabas, had the gift of prophecy:
 - (1) TIMOTHY: His call to ministry was prophesied (1 Tim. 1:18). He was co-author with Paul of the epistles: 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:1); Philippians (Phil. 1:1); Colossians (Col. 1:1); 1 Thessalonians (1 Thess. 1:1); 2 Thessalonians (2 Thess. 1:1); and Philemon (Phil. 1:1).
 - (2) TITUS: He fulfilled several prophetic functions, such as edification (2 Cor. 8:6); exhortation (Titus 2:6, 9, 15); and consolation (2 Cor. 7:13)

❖ False prophets

- Jesus warned that false prophets would arise, whom he called “ravening wolves” (Mt. 24:24; 7:15). These false prophets began to appear even within the early church (1 Jn. 4:1).
- Paul warned the elders of Ephesus that “ravening wolves” would arise among them (Acts 20:29). He warned the Corinthians about the existence of “false apostles” (2 Corinthians 11:13).
- True prophecy aligns with God's Word, points to Christ, and builds up the church, while false prophets promote divisive doctrines and self-interest.
- We believers are called to examine the prophets and make sure that all their messages are consistent with Scripture and Christ-centered.
- Our only defense against false prophets (and against the evil powers that direct them) is to put on the armor that God has provided for us (Eph. 6:10-18).

APPENDIX: THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF ELLEN G. WHITE'S MINISTRY

Ellen G. White's ministry had two fundamental focuses: to bring people to Jesus; and to direct their attention to the Bible.

FIRST AXIS: JESUS

After the 1888 congress, when asked about the topics discussed, she replied: "I have been presenting it to you for the last 45 years—the matchless charms of Christ" (Sermons and Talks, vol. 1, p. 116).

SECOND AXIS: THE BIBLE

Ellen never claimed that her writings were superior to the Bible, but always urged that they be tested by it. As a messenger of the Lord, she considered herself a "lesser light" guiding people to the "greater light," the Bible (Selected Messages, vol. 3, p. 29).