Quarter Four: *The Gift of Prophecy*

Jill Morikone

Lesson 4—New Testament Prophets

Thursday: False Prophets in the New Testament

October 22, 2026

- **Last Week:** "Old Testament Prophets"
  - Study of OT prophets: how the gift of prophecy was manifested through them; their humanity yet willingness to answer the call of God; true & false prophets

- **This Week:** "New Testament Prophets"
  - The Source, the Holy Spirit, inspired both OT and NT prophets.
    - Role of prophets & apostles in the NT; true & false prophets; who functioned as prophets

Memory Text: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all" (1 Cor 12:4-6, NKJV).

The week in brief:

- **1. Sunday:** Jesus as Prophet (Pastor John D)
  - Multiple Scriptures: all OT Messianic prophecies had their fulfillment in Jesus; He is our Creator & Redeemer, bringing Light to all & eternal life, if we accept
- **2. Monday:** Apostles & Prophets (Rise)
  - Multiple Scriptures: prophets & apostles called by God & uplift Jesus as central; both possess same level of inspiration but are not necessarily synonymous in their roles
- **3. Tuesday:** Functions of New Testament Prophets (Pastor John L)
  - Multiple Scriptures: prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit, given for the edification, encouragement & exhortation of the church
- **4. Wednesday:** Female Prophets & Young Pastoral Associates (Pastor James)
  - Multiple Scriptures – examples of female prophets in the NT; some canonical, some non-canonical; mentoring of younger men, such as Timothy & Titus
- **5. Thursday:** False Prophets in the New Testament (Jill)
  - Multiple Scriptures: danger of false prophets in both OT & NT & how to not be deceived
- **6. Friday:** Keeping Jesus & His Word at the Center (Pastor James)
  - EGW's focus on Jesus & the Word of God as the center of her ministry

Thursday: False Prophets in the New Testament

Matt 24:11, 23, 24; Eph 6:10 – 18; Luke 6:26; Matt 7:15 – 20

- Is it possible to have false prophets?
  - Matt 24:23, 24 – "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' Or 'There!' do not believe it. (24) For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible even the elect."

        - Miracles will be done by both true & false prophets
            - Miracles are not a sign of a true prophet

        - False prophets will arise, even at the end of time
            - False christs or a false "christ" will arise at the end of time
        - Do not be deceived

- 5 signs of a false prophet & 4 ways not to be deceived

5 signs of a false prophet

- **1. False Predictions** (foretelling prophecies)
    - Ex: "Lord is coming on this date" - & He doesn't come
    - Deut 18:22 – "when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."
        - Prophecies come to pass = sign of a true prophet
        - Prophecies that fail = sign of a false prophet

    - *Caveat: conditional prophecies
        - Conditional nature of predictive prophecy, such as Jonah
            - People repented & the Lord averted the coming tragedy
            - Ahab repented (1 Kings 21 / Naboth's vineyard) & Lord didn't bring prophecy right then

- **2. False Teachings** (forthtelling or foretelling) – directly contradict the Word of God
    - Ex: "Lord is coming on this date" – when the Word says no man knows the day nor the hour
    - Isa 8:20 – "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."
        - Test everything a prophet says by the Word of God
        - Prophecies that correlate with the Word of God = sign of a true prophet
        - Prophecies that contradict the Word of God = sign of a false prophet

    - *Caveat: study Word or prophet's words in context
        - Important to identify an actual direct contradiction vs apparent discrepancy

        - People say, Paul is about faith & James is about works
            - Is one a false prophet or apostle? No, study each passage in full context – there is no incongruence

        - Apparent gospel discrepancies:
            - How many demoniacs?
                - Matthew lists 2 (focus on numbers as a tax collector)
                - Mark & Luke list 1 (they don't say "only" – just focus on one predominate one)

            - How many blind men healed at Jericho?
                - Matthew lists 2 men healed (written to Jewish audience: anything in court required the mouth of 2 witnesses)

        - Mark & Luke focus on just one man (Bartimaeus)

    - Apparent discrepancies between EGW & Word of God:
        - Door of the ark:
            - PP states an angel shuts the door of the ark
            - Gen 7:16 says the Lord shut him in
            - Ans: Lord frequently performs work through His angels – acting on His behalf. Either explanation means the Lord orchestrated the shutting.

        - Temptation of Jesus – during 40 days or after:
            - EGW implies that Satan was tempted *during* the 40 days of fasting
            - Matt 4 says Satan came to Jesus *after* 40 days of fasting
            - Luke 4 says "Jesus was tempted for 40 days by the devil"

- **3. False Fruit**
    - Ex: claim to be a prophet & encourage people to kill themselves
        - Jim Jones – 1978
            - Directed more than 900 members of his cult to ingest a lethal drink
            - 900 people total died including 250 children died
        - What's the fruit of his ministry?

    - Matt 7:15 – 20 – "… (20) Therefore by their fruits you will know them."
        - Do they walk the talk?
        - Do they live as Christians?

        - Good fruit from prophet's life & ministry = sign of a true prophet
        - Bad or ungodly fruit from a prophet's life & ministry = sign of a false prophet
            - Investigate impact of their life & work

    - *Caveat: all prophets are human and their lives are not flawless
        - However, the trajectory of their life bears fruit (not the occasional mistake)
        - Moses = great prophet – still struck the rock & sinned
        - Elijah = great prophet – still ran from Jezebel & was discouraged
        - David = prophet (Peter called him so in his Pentecostal sermon) – was a murderer / adulterer
        - Jesus was the only perfect Prophet (Deut 18 – prophecy, God will raise up a Prophet like Moses)

- **4. False Focus** (lifting up self – not Jesus)
    - 1 John 4:1 – 3 – "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (2) By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, (3) and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God…"
        - Jesus at the center of all teaching & practice = sign of a true prophet
        - Self at the center of all teaching & practice = sign of a false prophet
- **5. False Popularity**

- Luke 6:26 – "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets."
  - People flattered / spoke well of false prophets

- Jer 5:31 – "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so. …"
  - People loved the false prophesies of the false prophets

- 1 Kings 22:8 – "So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, 'There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.'"
  - Prophets of God faced criticism

- Acts 7:51, 52 – "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. (52) Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,"
  - Stephen's defense / last sermon before being stoned to death

  - Insincere praise / flattery from others = sign of a false prophet (not always)
  - Criticism = sign of a true prophet (not always)

- Jesus = true prophet
  - People sang & waved palm branches one day & the next week He was on a cross
  - People flocked for miracles & many turned away right after (John 6)

- *Caveat: sometimes, a true prophet can have praise; sometimes a false prophet has criticisms
  - Zech 13:3 – "it shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father & mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father & mother who begot him shall thrust him through when he prophesies."
    - Spoken lies in the name of the Lord = a false prophet
    - Prediction of a time when false prophets will be killed

  - Luke 4:15 – "He (Jesus) was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised Him" (NIV).
    - People praised Jesus (at this moment)

4 ways to not be deceived

- **1. Be aware**
  - Matt 24:4 – "And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you.'"
    - Be aware that false prophets will come & deceive many

- **2. Be studied**
  - Acts 17:11 – Bereans searched the Scriptures daily to confirm Paul's teachings

- **3. Be obedient**

    - James 1:22 – “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”
        - Disobedience is connected with self-deception

- **4. Be clothed**
    - Eph 6:10 – 18 – put on the armor of Christ
        - Spiritual battle must be spiritually fought

5 signs of a false prophet

- 1. False Predictions
- 2. False Teachings (contradict God’s Word) (forthtelling or foretelling)
- 3. False Fruit
- 4. False Focus (lifting up self – not Jesus)
- 5. False Popularity

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