

What is a Prophet?

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The 2nd Year of the 4th Sabbatical Cycle

The 23rd year of the 120th Jubilee Cycle

The 4th day of the 2nd month 5854 years after the creation of Adam

The 2nd Month in the Second year of the Fourth Sabbatical Cycle

The second Sabbath of Seven Sabbaths

The 4th Sabbatical Cycle after the 119th Jubilee Cycle

The Sabbatical Cycle of Sword, Famines, and Pestilence

April 21, 2018

Shabbat Shalom To the Royal Family,

New Moon Report 2nd Month, 5854 years after Creation of Adam

We have begun the Second month as of Wednesday. This Sabbath is the 4th day of the second month.

Monday evening was the start of the 29th day. This is when those in Israel would have been looking for the moon. The moon was too low on the horizon to be seen so Monday evening and Tuesday day are the 30th day by default. There is never a 31 day month because the moon goes around the earth once every 29.5 days

The **sidereal period** of the moon is about 27.322 days, the length of time for the moon to travel exactly **360 degrees** in its orbit around the earth. However, the earth and moon have both traveled along earth's orbit during this sidereal period of the moon, so in order to orient itself the same way in relation to the earth and the sun (in other words, to show the same phase from earth's point of view) the moon has to move farther than 360 degrees in its orbit—in a sense to 'catch up' to the earth.

The Moon orbits Earth in the prograde direction and completes one revolution relative to the stars in about 27.322 days (a sidereal month) and one revolution relative to the Sun in about 29.530 days (a synodic month).

So that is the technical side of the orbit of the moon around the earth. Because the moon must catch up to the earth as the earth goes around the sun the synodic time is 29.530 days each month. If the earth was not moving around the sun then it would only take 27.322 days to go around the earth. It is this catching up period when the sun and the moon and the earth are aligned together that give us this illusion that the moon is full for three days. This is why we

have a full moon for what seems to be three days and a dark moon also for what seems to be three days as the moon must catch up to the earth as the earth orbits the sun.

So it is that .530 days that we must adjust for each month which is why we can only have a month of 29 days or one of 30 days.

It is also because of this very thing that the Hebraism is stated. "No Man can know the day or the Hour"

Mathew 24:36 "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

The Feast of Trumpets comes at a time no one can know. It is on this Feast Day that the Messiah is to come. But because this day is the first day of the seventh month and the month is determined by the sighting of the crescent moon, then no one can know this day or this hour. Not until it is actually seen by two witnesses. That is why we do not know if the moon is to be sighted on the 29th day or the 30th day. The end of this first month is the 30th day.

Psalm 89:37 Like the moon it shall be established forever,
a faithful witness in the skies." Selah

A witness can only be a witness having seen something. The moon can only be a witness when it is seen by people. A dark moon is dark for a much as three days and it is not seen nor is it witnessed because no one can see it.

Am I a Prophet?

In much of the advertising done in the Philippines for my last trip there, I was presented as a Prophet in these last days. See the video here as an example.

I know this has caused some to ask if indeed I am a prophet. While in the Philippines I was often called and introduced as Reverend or Pastor or Doctor or Evangelist, and as Prophet. I have not received any of these titles through any legally credentialed source. Nor have I taken on any of these titles that are added by many of those who seek a title like, PHD's or BS's or MS's to my name. I am simply Joseph F Dumond.

When Peter Kuiruz of The 700 Club Asia, CBN, asked me how I should be introduced, he went through each of those names above. I responded that I was simply a servant of Yehovah and nothing more. He really liked that. And Peter repeated this very conversation when he introduced me to the 700 Club Staff which you can watch in this video. It is a little bit truncated though.

In the past when people would ask me if I was a prophet I would respond by saying that anyone who quotes the scriptures is indeed a prophet. That, therefore, makes all of us prophets more or less.

But the question remains and is being asked by those who have seen my teachings in the Philippines. Do I want to be known as a Prophet? Truthfully I do not. To my recollection, almost all the prophets of the bible were killed. So who would want to take on that job or title?

Again, I must be truthful. And after I examine the facts I am left with one conclusion.

I am the only one teaching as far as I know about when the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are.

I am the only one teaching how the Sabbatical and Jubilee cycles reveal the truth about Daniel 9:24-27 and how it reveals the end of the nations of Israel and when that is to happen. This prophecy never was about Jesus.

Amos 3:7 “For the Lord God does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.

It is with that understanding in Amos 3, that I must consider what is shown to us in Daniel 9 and understand that Yehovah has shown us and revealed these end-time truths to His Servant. And that, it seems, is me.

I have been consistent from the start about people returning to the Torah and to only keeping those Holy Days found in Lev 23. And to this end, the Nation of the Philippines is even now including these Holy Days of Lev 23 as part of their constitution. They began this process after I spoke there in October 2015. It is before their Senate at this moment.

I always tell people to pray to and to follow Yehovah.

So does this make me a prophet of Yehovah?

Others have begun to call me Elijah delivering the end time message before the Day of the Lord.

Mal 4:5-6 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”

Mathew 15:10-13 And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?” He answered, “Elijah does come, and he will restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

What are all the things that Elijah is to restore?

The Sabbath, the Holy Days, the name, the proper keeping of the Holy Days at the proper time. The calendar issues. The Sabbatical and Jubilee years. These are the things that needed to be restored that Israel no longer kept.

The Sabbath was being restored in strength by the Seventh Day Adventists. Although there were some small groups that did maintain the Sabbath throughout history, the revival of it began in late 1800 with the SDA. Out of the SDA would come one Herbert Armstrong who founded the World Wide Church of God and they would begin to keep the 7 Annual Feasts of Lev 23 according to the Hebrew Calendar. Also at this time in the 1930' would come a split. I will let you read this short history of all these things.

Andrew N. Dugger (1886-1975) was the most famous Church of God, Seventh Day, leader in the twentieth century. He was born in Bassett, Nebraska.

Andrew N. Dugger's father, A.F. Dugger, Sr., had been an Advent Christian Minister. When commissioned by his church to do a study refuting the Sabbath, A.F. Dugger instead became convinced that the Sabbath should be observed. The result was a book he later published, called *The Bible Sabbath Defended*. For more than thirty-five years until his death in 1910, A.F. Dugger, Sr., was a leader in the Church of God, Seventh Day. His son Andrew, a school teacher and farmer, was in his early 20's when his father died.

A bright light in the sky around him seemed to Dugger to be a sign from God that he should follow his father's footsteps in the ministry. A.N. Dugger immediately sold his large farm and equipment, and went to the University of Chicago, where he majored in theology and public speaking, mastering Greek, Hebrew, and German.

Dugger periodically returned to Bassett to visit his mother and Effie Carpenter (1895-1980), a student of his whom he wanted to marry. Although he first proposed to her when she was sixteen, it wasn't until 1925 until they were married. They shared fifty years together.

Soon after college graduation, Dugger was invited by the Executive Committee of the Church of God to move to Stanberry, Missouri, to become editor of *The Bible Advocate*, a position his father had held before being forced to retire because of ill health. In 1914, Dugger arrived in Stanberry to begin his work in the ministry. For eighteen years he was editor, also serving as President of the General Conference. As field representative, he traveled widely, holding evangelistic meetings and public debates. The famous "Porter Dugger Debate," between Dugger and W. Curtis Porter, a Church of Christ minister, was later published as a book of over 230 pages. In 1919, Dugger wrote *The Bible Home Instructor*, which publicized the Seventh Day Church of God, and substantially increased its membership during the 1920s.

Two of Dugger's most adamant doctrinal positions were: a scriptural form of church organization with leaders chosen by lot rather than election, and a world headquarters in Jerusalem, Israel. After visiting Israel for only a year in 1931-32, Dugger returned to live in Sweet Home, Oregon. In 1935, A.N. Dugger and C.O. Dodd published *A History of the True Church*, which traces

Sabbath-keepers from apostolic times to modern days. Dugger greatly influenced Herbert Armstrong, who was for years affiliated with the Church of God, Seventh Day, but later formed his own church, the Radio (later Worldwide) Church of God.

Dugger remained pastor at Marion, Oregon until 1953, when he and Effie settled permanently in Jerusalem, and launched the Mt. Zion Reporter. His aggressive leadership resulted in thousands of converts around the world. Andrew N. Dugger died in 1975 at the age of 89. Dugger's son-in-law, Gordon Fauth, continued the Jerusalem work at Mount Zion Reporter, P.O. Box 568, Jerusalem, Israel.

Clarence O. Dodd (1899-1955), a founder of the Sacred Name Movement, lived in Salem, West Virginia, most of his life. In 1920, he married Martha Richmond. A writer and minister, Dodd firmly believed that he should support himself and his family, earning his own way, and serve the Almighty's people without pay. He worked as a clerk for 35 years for Hope Natural Gas Company until he retired early due to Hodgkins' disease. He died two years later.

Dodd taught a Methodist Bible class. He was standing on main street of Salem one day, when a man gave him a tract on the Sabbath, which convicted Dodd of the Bible Sabbath. He never saw the man again, and was convinced the agent was an angel. He became a leading minister in the Church of God, 7th Day. At the November 4, 1933, meeting in Salem, West Virginia, when the Church of God split, Dodd was chosen by lot as one of the seventy elders (along with Herbert Armstrong), as well as one of the seven men placed over the business affairs of the Church (along with A.N. Dugger).

After the 1933 split of the Church of God (Seventh Day) into the Stanberry and Salem factions, Dodd became editor of the Salem Bible Advocate. He had begun to accept the annual Feast Days in 1928, which put him at odds with the leadership. In 1937, he resigned, and began to publish his own magazine, The Faith. A year later, Dodd accepted the Sacred Name doctrine. His wrote many articles and tracts, using his own funds to establish a print shop in his home. His writings are sometimes reprinted in The Faith magazine, now published by the Assembly of Yahweh, PO Box 102, Holt, Michigan 48842. A full list of his articles is available from The Faith Bible and Tract Society, PO Box 321, Amherst, Ohio 44001, carried on by his daughter, Mary Dodd Ling, since 1978.

Dodd had a close relationship with Church of God (Seventh Day) Elder John Kiesz, who held evangelistic meetings in Salem, W. Va. around the 1930s. Kiesz likewise believed in the annual Holy Days, and was favorable to the Sacred Name doctrine. Kiesz named his youngest daughter Martha after Dodd's wife. Dodd never met Herbert Armstrong, but corresponded with him via mail.

Mary Dodd Ling describes her father as a very handsome, personable man. He was an avid student of the Bible, writer, and a man of prayer. Martha Dodd, an integral part of his ministry, died in 1982. Dodd's associates in the Sacred Name movement were Cessna, Briggs, Smith, William Bodine, and A.B. Traina (who translated a Sacred Name Bible). When Dodd accepted the doctrine that believers must use the Hebrew names Yahweh and Yahshua, he was rebaptized into the name of Yahshua.

Clarence Dodd was perhaps more of a writer than a speaker and debater like Dugger. It is likely that in collaborating with Dugger on the book, A History of the True Church, Dodd had the greater part in writing.

For a history of the Sacred Name movement, see the article, "Origin and History of the Sacred Name Movement," written by Richard C. Nickels, available from Giving & Sharing.

I myself began to attend the World Wide Church of God in 1982 and was there until the great split in 1994. I was on my own for 7 years after that until I began to attend with United Church of God, one of the 800 offshoots of WWCG. I would then set out on my own in 2006.

The search for the Barely to begin the year began around 1988. Nehemiah Gordon would become involved about 1993.

In 1999, a scholar named Gerard Gertoux proposed that the name was Yehowah, 3 years before Nehemiah Gordon learned about the Choram in the Leningrad and Aleppo Codex in 2001. He would then tell Keith Johnson in 2002 and they would begin their research into the name of Yehovah. They now have over 1100 manuscripts with the vowel pointing all showing the name to be Yehovah and not once did it show up as Yahweh.

It would be in 2004 that I first heard Nehemiah Gordon and Michael Rood teaching on the crescent moon and the barley to begin the year. In 2005 I adjusted my keeping of the Holy Days according to the Hebrew Calendar to keeping them by the crescent moon to begin the month and the Barely to begin the year.

It was only after that time that I began to understand the Sabbatical and Jubilee years and to then begin to teach them to anyone I could. I only had 12 proof years at this time and today we have 45 historical and biblical proofs that prove beyond all doubt when the Sabbatical and Jubilee years are.

The restoration of all these things was not done by any one person but by many men of Yehovah over the past century. Which one of them could rightfully claim to be Elijah?

But there are two witnesses that will be doing a work in the last days and will be telling people through their ministry to return to Yehovah. Again who these two are is anyone's guess.

I do not claim to be Elijah nor should anyone who knows the history of the restoration of these events.

Recently a very dear friend said of me that I was a Tzadik. I did not know what that meant so I looked it up.

Tzadik/Zadik/Sadiq [tsa'dik] (Hebrew: צדיק, “righteous one”, pl. tzadikim [tsadi'kim] צדיקים ? adiqim) is a title in Judaism given to people considered righteous, such as Biblical figures and later spiritual masters. The root of the word ‘adiq, is ד-ק (דק tzedek), which means “justice” or “righteousness”. The feminine term for a righteous person is tzadeikes/tzaddeket.

Now that is the title I would be honoured to have.

I do hope this will help those asking to understand the truth.

What Is A Prophet?

What Is A Prophet?

This raised a very important question; “What do we mean when we speak of prophets, and who are prophets?” We must find what the Bible says about this subject.

The first person in the Bible to be called a prophet was Abraham, the “Father of the Faithful.” It is important to notice also, that it was God who gave him this title. The story is found in Genesis 20:6-7. A heathen prince had taken Abraham’s wife, and God commanded him to restore her, saying of Abraham, “he is a prophet. . . .” (the Hebrew word is “nabi” as it is also in Arabic).

Without doubt there were other men before Abraham who were prophets. Enoch was one, for instance (compare Genesis 5:24 with Jude 14). But Abraham was the first person to be designated a prophet by the clear Word of God.

Many God-appointed prophets arose after Abraham. They were chosen from many walks of life. Moses was adopted in infancy by an Egyptian princess and thus received a prince’s education. (Read in your Bible, for example, Exodus 2:5-10; Acts 7:21-22.) Ezekiel and Jeremiah were priests as well as prophets. David was first a shepherd, then warrior, king and poet and a prophet as well. Amos was a herdsman (Amos 1:1). Elisha was a plowman (1 Kings 19:15-21). Daniel was a government administrator (Daniel 2:48). From such diverse backgrounds, God chose His prophets. Their influence and authority did not come from their rank, education, wisdom or wealth, but entirely from the fact that God chose them to be His messengers. So we may define a prophet as one appointed by God Himself to be His messenger.

Now we must examine the Bible to expand this brief definition. Notice first that God chose His messengers. The following Scriptures demonstrate this:

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go out from your country, your relatives, and your father’s household to the land that I will show you. Then I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, so that you will exemplify divine blessing. I will bless those who bless you, but the one who treats you lightly I must curse, and all the families of the earth will bless one another by your name.” So Abram left, just as the Lord had told him to do, and Lot went with him. (Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.) (Genesis 12:1-4).

Now Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to the mountain of God, to Horeb. The Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from within a bush. He looked—and the bush was ablaze with fire, but it was not being consumed! So Moses thought, “I will turn aside to see this amazing sight. Why does the bush not burn up?” When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him from within the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” God said, “Do not come near here. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” He also said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Then Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt. I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. I have come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land to a land that is both good and large, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the region of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. And now, indeed, the cry of the Israelites has come to me, and I have also seen how severely the Egyptians oppress them. So now, go, and I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.” Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, or that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” He replied, “Surely I will be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I have sent you: When you bring the people out of Egypt, you and they will serve God on this mountain.” (Exodus 3:1-12).

Then the Lord came and stood nearby, calling as he had previously done, “Samuel! Samuel!” Samuel replied, “Speak, for your servant is listening!” The Lord said to Samuel, “Look! I am about to do something in Israel; when anyone hears about it, both of his ears will tingle.” (1 Samuel 3:10-11).

The Lord said to me, “Before I formed you in your mother’s womb I chose you. Before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.” I answered, “Oh, Lord God, I really do not know how to speak well enough for that, for I am too young. The Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ But go to whomever I send you and say whatever I tell you. Do not be afraid of those to whom I send you, for I will be with you to rescue you,” says the Lord. Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I will most assuredly give you the words you are to speak for me. Know for certain that I hereby give you the authority to announce to nations and kingdoms that they will be uprooted and torn down, destroyed and demolished, rebuilt and firmly planted.” (Jeremiah 1:5-10).

God in His wisdom chose men who would obey Him faithfully and He gave them authority to speak on His behalf. Prophets were not chosen or elected by men, and they were not permitted to inherit the title or regard it as an official post to be filled by a man specially trained for it.

Notice also that God told them what to do. We may find example of the work of a true prophet in a number of references as follows. Their work was:

1. To reveal the nature and attributes of God to men.

The following Scriptures show this:

The Lord spoke face to face with you at the mountain, from the middle of the fire. (I was standing between the Lord and you then to reveal to you the message of the Lord, because you were afraid of the fire and would not go up the mountain.) He said: "I am the Lord your God, he who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the place of slavery. You must not have any other gods besides me. You must not make for yourself an image of anything in heaven above, on earth below, or in the waters beneath. You must not worship or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I punish the sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons for the sin of the fathers who reject me, but I show covenant faithfulness to the thousands who choose me and keep my commandments." (Deuteronomy 5:4-10).

The Lord spoke to Moses: "Speak to the whole congregation of the Israelites and tell them, 'You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy. Each of you must respect his mother and his father, and you must keep my Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God. Do not turn to idols, and you must not make for yourselves gods of cast metal. I am the Lord your God.'" (Leviticus 19:1-4).

2. To make known to men the laws of God.

For example Exodus 20:1-17 says:

And God spoke all these words: “I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on earth under it, or that is in the water below. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, who visits the iniquity of fathers on children, even to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but who extends faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold guiltless anyone who takes his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. For six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or your resident foreigner who is in your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God is giving to you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

3. To call the people back to obedience to God’s laws.

Read 2 Chronicles 24:19— The Lord sent prophets among them to lead them back to him. They warned the people, but they would not pay attention.

4. To exhort the people to sincerity in worship.

An example of this is found in Jeremiah 7:1-11:

The Lord said to Jeremiah: “Stand in the gate of the Lord’s temple and proclaim this message: ‘Listen, all you people of Judah who have passed through these gates to worship the Lord. Hear what the Lord has to say. The Lord God of Israel who rules overall says: Change the way you have been living and do what is right. If you do, I will let you continue to live in this land. Stop putting your confidence in the delusive belief that says, “We are safe! The temple of the Lord is here! The temple of the Lord is here! The temple of the Lord is here!” You must change the way you have been living and do what is right. You must treat one another fairly. Stop oppressing foreigners who live in your land, children who have lost their fathers, and women who have lost their husbands. Stop killing innocent people in this land. Stop paying allegiance to other gods. That will only bring about your ruin. If you do all this, I will let you continue to live here in this land which I gave to your ancestors as a lasting possession. ““But just look at you! You are putting your confidence in a false way of thinking that will not help you at all. You steal. You murder. You commit adultery. You lie when you swear an oath. You sacrifice to the god Baal. You pay allegiance to other gods that you do not really know. Then you come and stand here in my presence in this house I have claimed as my own and say, “We are safe!” You think you are so safe that you go on doing all those hateful sins! Do you think this house I have claimed as my own is to be a hideout for robbers? You had better take note! I have seen for myself what you have done! says the Lord.””

5. To warn them of Divine judgment upon sin, both personal and national.

See Jeremiah 36:30-31:

So the Lord says concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah, “None of his line will occupy the throne of David. And his dead body will be thrown out to be exposed to scorching heat by day and frost by night. I will punish him and his descendants and the officials who serve him for the wicked things they have done. I will bring on them and the citizens of Jerusalem and the people of Judah all the disaster that I threatened to do to them. I will punish them because I threatened them but they still paid no heed.”

6. To foretell future events which God had willed.

A good illustration of this would be Jeremiah 30:1-3:

The Lord spoke to Jeremiah. He said, “The Lord God of Israel who rules overall says, ‘Write everything that I am about to tell you in a scroll. For I, the Lord affirm that the time will come when I will reverse the fortunes of my people, Israel and Judah,’ says the Lord. ‘I will bring them back to the land I gave their ancestors and they will take possession of it once again.’”

7. To foretell the coming of the Messiah, the Savior.

See for example Isaiah 9:6:

For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us. He shoulders responsibility and is called: Extraordinary Strategist, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

8. To record the history of God's dealings with men.

An example of this is in Deuteronomy 31:9-13:

Then Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests, who carry the ark of the Lord's covenant, and to all Israel's elders. He commanded them: "At the end of seven years, at the appointed time of the cancellation of debts, at the Feast of Temporary Shelters, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God in the place he chooses, you must read this law before them within their hearing. Gather the people—men, women, and children, as well as the resident foreigners in your villages—so they may hear and thus learn about and fear the Lord your God and carefully obey all the words of this law. Then their children, who have not known this law, will also hear about and learn to fear the Lord your God for as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

9. To record the Word of God in the Holy Scriptures.

The following are examples of this:

And the Lord said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in Joshua's hearing; for I will surely wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens." (Exodus 17:14).

And the Lord said to Moses, "Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." (Exodus 34:27).

So on that day Moses wrote down this song and taught it to the Israelites, and the Lord commissioned Joshua son of Nun, "Be strong and courageous, for you will take the Israelites to the land I have promised them, and I will be with you." When Moses finished writing on a scroll the words of this law in their entirety, he commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the Lord's covenant, "Take this scroll of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God. It will remain there as a witness against you" (Deuteronomy 31:22-26).

The Lord spoke to Jeremiah in the fourth year that Jehoiakim son of Josiah was ruling over Judah. He said, "Get a scroll. Write on it everything I have told you to say about Israel, Judah, and all the other nations since I began to speak to you in the reign of Josiah until now." (Jeremiah 36:1-2).

The Lord spoke to Jeremiah after Jehoiakim had burned the scroll containing what Jeremiah had spoken and Baruch had written down. He said, "Get another scroll and write on it everything that was written on the original scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned." (Jeremiah 36:27-28).

This list is by no means complete but it shows the importance of the work of a prophet. Even the humblest and most ordinary men became important, influential and authoritative in Israel when called to be prophets. Some prophets were called to challenge the whole nation (1 Kings 18:21), or to rebuke evil kings (1 Kings 21:17-24; Daniel 5:17-28) and many were given power to perform miracles to support their authority. An example of this is in Exodus 17:5-6

And the Lord said to Moses, “Go over before the people; take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand your rod with which you struck the Nile and go. I will be standing before you there on the rock in Horeb, and you will strike the rock, and water will come out of it so that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in plain view of the elders of Israel.

In the nation of Israel, prophets were more important than kings, warriors or priests.

Because the prophets were so influential, it is not surprising that early in history, false prophets appeared, pretending to be God’s messengers in order to support their own ambitions for power, authority and personal advancement. Because of this, God gave clear instructions to the people to examine the credentials of all who claimed to be prophets. These Divine instructions are found in Deuteronomy 18:9-22. This paragraph is so important that the student should read it before going any further with this lesson. Here it is:

When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you, you must not learn the abhorrent practices of those nations. There must never be found among you anyone who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, anyone who practices divination, an omen reader, a soothsayer, a sorcerer, one who casts spells, one who conjures up spirits, a practitioner of the occult, or a necromancer. Whoever does these things is abhorrent to the Lord and because of these things the Lord your God is about to drive them out from before you. You must be blameless before the Lord your God. Those nations that you are about to dispossess listen to omen readers and diviners, but the Lord your God has not given you permission to do such things. The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you—from your fellow Israelites; you must listen to him. This accords with what happened at Horeb in the day of the assembly. You asked the Lord your God: “Please do not make us hear the voice of the Lord our God any more or see this great fire any more lest we die.” The Lord then said to me, “What they have said is good. I will raise up a prophet like you for them from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth and he will speak to them whatever I command. I will personally hold responsible anyone who then pays no attention to the words that prophet speaks in my name. “But if any prophet presumes to speak anything in my name that I have not authorized him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die. Now if you say to yourselves, ‘How can we tell that a message is not from the Lord?’— whenever a prophet speaks in my name and the prediction is not fulfilled, then I have not spoken it; the prophet has presumed to speak it, so you need not fear him.”

Notice that God warned the people that all pagan practices and customs were strictly forbidden. In particular, God warned them not to seek help or guidance through occult practices like divination, witchcraft or necromancy (the belief that spirits of dead people can be used to obtain help). We are expressly told, Whoever does these things is abhorrent to the

Lord. As these practices were strictly forbidden, how were the people of Israel to obtain help and guidance? God gave them a clear answer; I will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you. . . . God would not permit pagan methods of seeking help, but He would appoint His own prophets through whom He would speak and guide those who desired to know the truth. From this important Scripture we find certain definite rules by which the people could know a true prophet sent by God.

A TRUE PROPHET SPEAKS IN THE NAME OF YEHOVAH

We have already explained that this name of God, used so frequently in the Bible, was spelled by the Hebrew consonants Y.H.W.H. and pronounced Yehovah, but is found in our English Bibles either as Jehovah or more often as Lord. In the passage just quoted we find 10 occurrences of this Divine title. God, speaking through Moses, made it clear that only those prophets who spoke in the name of Yehovah were to be accepted.

A TRUE PROPHET WILL BE CHOSEN BY GOD FROM ONE OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

Verse 18 says he shall be from among their fellow Israelites. Moses was speaking to Israelites and it is clear that he said that God would raise up a prophet from among you (verse 15). This same expression (fellow Israelites) is found in Deuteronomy 3:18 and Deuteronomy 17:15 where God said that the future kings of Israel must be chosen from among their brethren—they were not to set a foreigner over them as their king. Thus it is clear the prophet must be an Israelite.

A TRUE PROPHET WILL SPEAK THE WORDS WHICH YEHOVAH PUTS INTO HIS MOUTH (VERSE 18)

God's message is often rejected by sinful men because God demands obedience to His Word, but a true prophet will not try to make his message popular. A false prophet however appeals to popular enthusiasm. Notice the example in Isaiah 30:8-11 where the people ask the false prophets to prophesy nice things—

Now go, write it down on a tablet in their presence, inscribe it on a scroll, so that it might be saved for a future time as an enduring witness. For these are rebellious people—they are lying children, children unwilling to obey the Lord's law. They say to the visionaries, "See no more visions!" and to the seers, "Don't relate messages to us about what is right! Tell us nice things, relate deceptive messages. Turn aside from the way, stray off the path. Remove from our presence the sovereign king of Israel."

Jeremiah shows us that a true prophet does not invent his message—he is inspired by God—

Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I will most assuredly give you the words you are to speak for me.” (Jeremiah 1:9).

A TRUE PROPHET WILL BE VINDICATED BY THE FULFILLMENT OF HIS MESSAGE (VERSE 18)

Again Jeremiah gives a clear illustration of this. Read Jeremiah 14:14-16:

Then the Lord said to me, “Those prophets are prophesying lies while claiming my authority. I did not send them. I did not commission them. And I did not speak to them. They are just prophesying to these people false visions, worthless predictions, and the delusions of their own mind. I did not send those prophets, though they claim to be prophesying in my authority. They may be saying, ‘No war or famine will happen in this land.’ But I, the Lord, say this about them: ‘War and starvation will kill those prophets.’ And the people to whom they are prophesying will die through war and famine. Their bodies will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem and they won’t even be buried. That will happen to the men and their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out on them the destruction they deserve.”

God had told Jeremiah to announce that Jerusalem would be captured by the Babylonian army, as a punishment for the sins of the people. False prophets opposed Jeremiah and denied his words, suggesting that he was a traitor. But God said that the false prophets themselves would die by the sword of the Babylonians. This was literally fulfilled, and thus the words of Jeremiah were proved to be God’s message, while the popular message of the false prophets was shown to be lies, even though they had dared to use the name of Jehovah. A similar incident is seen in 1 Kings 22:5-28 where Micaiah was sent to prison for speaking God’s word, but the king who foolishly believed the words of the false prophets was killed in battle.

A FALSE PROPHET MUST BE PUT TO DEATH FOR TEACHING REBELLION AGAINST YEHOVAH, THE GOD OF THE ISRAELITES

This commandment is found in the following Scriptures:

Suppose a prophet or one who foretells by dreams should appear among you and show you a sign or wonder, and the sign or wonder should come to pass concerning what he said to you, namely, “Let us follow other gods”—gods whom you have not previously known—“and let us serve them.” You must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer, for the Lord your God will be testing you to see if you love him with all your mind and being. You must follow the Lord your God and revere only him; and you must observe his commandments, obey him, serve him, and remain loyal to him. As for that prophet or dreamer, he must be executed because he encouraged rebellion against the Lord your God who brought you from the land of Egypt, redeeming you from the place of slavery, and because he has tried to entice you from the way the Lord your God has commanded you to go. In this way you must purge out evil from within (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)

But if any prophet presumes to speak anything in my name that I have not authorized him to speak, or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die (Deuteronomy 18:20)

The severity of this penalty emphasizes how dangerous false prophets are. No matter how important a person might be, or however closely he might be related to the king or anyone who might help decide his fate, he was to be treated as a traitor if he dared to speak a message that turned people away from the worship of Yehovah.

In all these verses notice the constant emphasis on the words, the Lord (Yehovah) your God. Pagan nations had degraded the meaning of the word God (Elohim) to include their idols, and so God the Creator stated that henceforth He would be known by His personal name, Yehovah. Not only was this a distinguishing feature of the worship of the One True God, but we find that the oft-repeated expression the name of the Lord was a Hebrew idiom which means “in the authority of the Lord” and “in the character of the Lord.” Thus a prophet who spoke in the name of Yehovah was speaking by the authority of Yehovah and in the character of Yehovah. Yehovah is holy, therefore the message must be holy in character and the messenger must likewise display the holiness of life which would be evidence of his truthfulness.

All prophets were to be tested thus concerning the origin of their words, and the meaning and the purpose of their teaching. That teaching must come from Yehovah; it must be true to the earlier revelation of the character of Yehovah, and it must be designed to encourage men to be faithful to Yehovah. Put these points together and you will find God’s method for testing the credentials of a true prophet:

1. He must be a true Israelite.
2. He must speak in the name of the Lord (Yehovah).
3. He must call men to living obedience to Yehovah and worship of Yehovah.
4. He must be tested and vindicated by the fulfillment of predictions made by him in the name of Yehovah, by the authority of Yehovah and in keeping with the character of Yehovah.

This explains why the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles in the New Testament were members of the Hebrew (Israelite) people. Apart from these Biblical prophets and apostles, no man has ever been known to fulfill the Divine requirements laid down in the above verses. Many men have claimed to be leaders, teachers and prophets, but when we examine their credentials, we find that they were not members of the Hebrew race, nor did they speak in the name of Yehovah.

Thus the Bible alone contains the authentic teachings of God's chosen messengers, prophets and apostles, and although the message of the Bible is not a popular one that appeals to the hearts of proud men, it is the Word of God and shows the way to eternal life.

There is one final comment which is of vital importance to this study. We have noted that God revealed the criteria for the recognition of a true prophet. But the verses in Deuteronomy 18 go further than that. They contain a definite prediction of the coming of a specific prophet. The Jews always understood this verse to be a clear promise concerning the coming Messiah. This is clear from the following verses. Read for example John 1:19-23 and note that when John the

Baptist began to preach, he was asked, "Are you the Prophet?"

Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed—he did not deny but confessed—"I am not the Christ!" So they asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not!" "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No!" Then they said to him, "Who are you? Tell us so that we can give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" John said, "I am the voice of one shouting in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said."

Also in John 6:14 we see how the people, impressed by the power of Jesus, said,

Now when the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus performed, they began to say to one another, "This is certainly the Prophet who is to come into the world."

In John 7:40 again the people said, When they heard these words, some of the crowd began to say, "This really is the Prophet!" It is clear that the Jewish people expected a precise and personal fulfillment of this prophecy and when John the Baptist appeared they thought he was The Prophet, but John humbly disclaimed that honor, and directed their attention to Jesus — (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) So they asked John, "Why then are you baptizing if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them,

"I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not recognize, who is coming after me. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandal!" These things happened in Bethany across the Jordan River where John was baptizing. On the next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one about whom I said, 'After me comes a man who is greater than I am, because he existed before me.'" (John 1:24-30).

The people then recognized Jesus as the Prophet. The people were right in thus recognizing Jesus as The Prophet. The Apostle Peter clearly taught that the great prediction was completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We read:

Therefore repent and turn back so that your sins may be wiped out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and so that he may send the Messiah appointed for you—that is, Jesus. This one heaven must receive until the time all things are restored, which God declared from times long ago through his holy prophets. Moses said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must obey him in everything he tells you. Every person who does not obey that prophet will be destroyed and thus removed from the people” And all the prophets, from Samuel and those who followed him, have spoken about and announced these days You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, “And in your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed.’ God raised up his servant and sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each one of you from your iniquities.” (Acts 3:19-26).

This one short paragraph then in Deuteronomy 18 contains remarkable truth. It sets out for all time the criteria for the recognition of a true prophet, and also a prediction of the coming of The True Prophet, a prediction which was finally and perfectly fulfilled in the coming of Jesus

Christ. When Jesus came to the Jews, He fulfilled all the conditions of the prediction in Deuteronomy and thus His disciples accepted Him as the promised Prophet and Messiah. So certain is this fact that the Apostle Peter said, Every person who does not obey that prophet will be destroyed and thus removed from the people.’ (Acts 3:23). This is a solemn warning to those who reject the claims of Jesus Christ.