

The Parameters Of Prophetic Ministry.

Introduction.

The importance of prophetic ministry to the Church of Christ, and the absolute necessity of studying it can be seen from the following facts.

a) Our Lord was a prophet.

God promised in the Scriptures, that He was going to "raise up" a Messiah from among the Israelites, who was going to be "a prophet like unto Moses." Deut 18v15-19, John 1v21. The Scriptures were fulfilled and the Lord Jesus had the greatest ministry of all of Israel's prophets. If we want to understand the life, ministry and spiritual conflicts of the Lord Jesus, we have to do an in-depth study of prophetic ministry. This will give a totally new insight into the life and ministry of our Lord, and will spiritually change, for the better, all who study it. 2Cor 3v18. We will consider our Lord's prophetic ministry at greater length later in this study.

b) God promises a resurgence of prophetic ministry at the end of the age.

The study of the parameters of prophetic ministry is also of critical importance at this time in the history of the Church, for the coming of the final Antichrist and the Great Tribulation, will bring a great change to the ministries of the Church. Through most of this Age of Grace, God's power gifts through His Church have been almost completely devoted to a demonstration of divine mercy gifts of healing, protection and provision. The judgement gifts that operated upon Ananias and Sapphira, Herod, Elymas the sorcerer, and Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander have been the rare exception, not the rule. Acts 5v1-11, 12v1-4,20-24, 13v6-12, 1Tim 1v18-20, 2Tim 2v14-19. However, God's Word reveals that in the closing years of this age, there is going to be a manifestation of prophetic revelation and judgement ministry, the like of which has not been seen since the days of Moses and Elijah. Indeed, God tells us in Rev 11v5,6, that the two witnesses will have authority, "exousia," in the following remarkable ways:

1) God will give them authority to destroy by fire the enemies that try to kill them. The fact that the fire is said to proceed from their mouths shows that the fire comes when the prophets speak out a word of judgement. All who try to kill them die by fire from God, as did the 102 soldiers in 2Kings 1v1-18, when Elijah executed them with the power of God. This protecting fire of God is a continual abiding protection to the two witnesses, and this and their judgement ministries causes the enemies of God to fear them. Rev 11v10. This ministry will also obviously act as a protection for the children of God in the area of their ministry in the last days, like the arrow of deliverance that Elisha sent out in 2Kings 13v14-21.

2) God will give them authority to do what Elijah did and to stop the rainfall, so that they will bring a drought for the three and a half years of their prophetic ministry. James 5v17, Rev 11v3,6.

3) God will give them authority to turn waters to blood.

4) God will give them authority to strike the earth "with every plague." "En pasei plegei," "as often as they shall desire," "hosakis ean thelesosin;" "thelesosin," is the first aorist active subjunctive of "thelo," so it reads "as often as they will." This is a totally new level of authority for the Church, and the terrible wickedness that is coming upon the world makes it absolutely essential for this level of judgement ministry to be possessed by Christ's Church. **It is high time for the Church to awake to the hour that we are living in, and prepare for the dark days ahead.** There is a remarkable contrast between the almost total emphasis on mercy gifts by the Lord Jesus and His Church in Israel at the start of the Age of Grace; and the almost total emphasis upon judgement gifts through the two witnesses in Israel at the end of the age. These two witnesses show that the Church is going to experience a resurgence of the full power of prophetic ministry at the end of this age, and that God is going to give to some prophets the ultimate in judicative power and authority. The Church will also experience a considerably heightened level of the mercy gifts of healing, provision and protection; the latter rain that came just before the harvest, was always much greater than the former rain that came at the sowing of the seed. God has promised greater things at the end of the age than at the beginning of the age. Deut 11v14, Joel 2v23,28-32, Acts 2v16-21, James 5v7,8.

c) Prophets are next to apostles in importance. 1Cor 12v28, Eph 4v11.

Prophetic ministry was the most important ministry in the Old Testament; however, Paul puts it second to apostolic

ministry, and before Pastor-teacher ministry in 1Cor 12v28. The New Covenant of grace and mercy required a ministry that was almost totally given over to the proclamation of forgiveness and healing. Apostolic ministry was needed to win converts and establish the churches in doctrine and experience. Some prophets like Judas and Silas, were "leading men among the brethren," and had the very important role of encouraging and strengthening the Christians in the churches. Acts 15v22,32. Silas became a companion of Paul and became an apostle as well as a prophet. Acts 15v40, 16v25,29, 17v10. Paul and Barnabus were counted among the teachers and prophets at Antioch before they became apostles. Acts 13v1-4.

d) Prophets and prophecy can vary a great deal in purpose and importance.

The Scriptures reveal that there is a considerable variety in power and function between different prophets and their prophetic call and ministries. God gives some prophets prophecies that are of a local and only temporary significance, however, He gives other prophets prophecies that are of national or international importance. God has spoken to prophets in many ways, "polutropos," as well as in many parts, "plumeros." Heb 1v1. There are many "varieties of operation," 1Cor 12v4-6, and also many different levels of authority in prophetic ministry. God told Aaron and Miriam that their prophetic revelation by dreams, visions and dark sayings was greatly inferior to the face to face revelation that Moses experienced. Numb 12v6-8. Some prophets have a prophetic office and are used by God to continually minister on the highest level of words of wisdom and knowledge, and they have a prophetic ministry that goes beyond the bounds of the local area or local Church. Some prophets, like Moses and Elijah, manifested great power gifts as well as revelation gifts; others, like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, were limited to revelation gifts only; either because of the nature of their prophetic call and gift, or perhaps because the nation was under discipline and judgement, and so their gifts could possibly not operate to the full because of the sin in Israel. There could be no deliverance because Israel's spiritual condition was beyond remedy, even by God; and they were handed over by God for seventy years of discipline at the hand of a heathen nation. 2Chron 36v15-23, Jer 25v11, 29v10. The longsuffering mercy of God with a rebellious and stubborn people was truly amazing, but Israel despised the riches of God's kindness and mercy and suffered the consequences of it. Rom 2v1-4.

e) Our Lord's warns us to listen to what the Holy Spirit says to the Churches.

We need to tremble at the Word of the Lord, and hear what the Holy Spirit says to the Churches. Isaiah 66v2,3, Rev 2v7,11,17,29, 3v6,13,22. It is a serious sin not to recognise the prophetic ministries that God has set in His Church, if we harden our hearts and refuse to listen to God's voice we are in real spiritual danger. Heb 3v7 to 4v7, Luke 19v41-44, Matt 23v37-39. The Church is greatly impoverished if it fails to recognise and receive the unsearchable loving wisdom of God that can come through prophetic ministry. 1Cor 12v28. There is a real danger of being sceptical about prophecies, and Christians can look upon prophecy as a rather beautiful and pleasant thing, but without any real importance. The simple gift of prophecy is not as important as the revelations of the mind and purposes of God that come through the prophetic office, but it has an important place in the local Church. Even Timothy was not attaching the importance to prophetic revelation that he should have done. 1Tim 4 v14,15, 2Tim 1v6-8. We should test and prove all prophecies, but we should never despise genuine prophesying. 1Thess 5v19,20. The idea that no real notice should be taken of prophetic utterances is quite perilous and reveals a real spirit of scepticism and an evil heart of unbelief. Heb 4v12. The people who ignored the Old Testament prophets got into real trouble and ended up in defeat and captivity. Jehoshaphat knew that to prosper, you had to believe the Word of God through the prophets. 2Chron 20v20. If we ignore genuine prophetic utterances, it can have the most serious consequences; Paul got into real trouble by ignoring the Holy Spirit's repeated command through the Christians at Tyre, not to go up to Jerusalem; and the confirmatory warning of Agabus at Caesarea, in the house of Philip. Acts 21v10-13, 22v17-21, 26v29. If the seven Churches in the book of Revelation had only taken heed to the Holy Spirit as He spoke through the prophets in these Churches, they would not have got into the shocking state that some of them did get into. However, let us first clear up some wrong ideas about prophetic ministry.

1) The Prophetic Office Must Not Be Confused With The Gift Of Prophecy.

a) All Christians may prophesy, but very few hold a prophetic office and ministry.

The Christian with the simple gift of prophecy usually only has a ministry to the local Church, the person with a prophetic office can have a wider ministry outside of his locality, and can have an itinerant prophetic ministry to that part of the universal Church to which God sends him. 1Cor 14v5,24,31. This does not give prophets with a prophetic office, autocratic authority over, or authority to direct, the local leaders, or people, to whom they are sent. Prophets who follow the example of the Lord Jesus will be "gentle and lowly in heart," like their Lord. Matt 11v28-30. Humility of mind is an essential part of prophetic ministry, for God will not entrust the higher levels of spiritual power and

revelation to thoughtless, arrogant and hard hearted people. "Moses was very gentle, kind and humble, above all the men on the face of the earth," and this was why God gave him the remarkable ministry that He did; God could trust him with power, because He could trust him with His people. Num 12v3. Moses was not allowed to go into the promised land, because on just one occasion he let the people of Israel provoke him, "so that he spake unadvisedly and rashly with his lips." Psalm 106v32,33, Num 20v3-13. God disciplined Moses and made an example of him "for their sakes," to warn Israel that no one could get away with pride, and being hard and angry with God's people, and to show that "to whom much is given of him shall much be required." Luke 12v48.

b) All Christians may prophesy, but few continually manifest gifts of revelation.

The three gifts of revelation are; a word of wisdom, a word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits; which are quite different from the simple gift of prophecy which is used to build up, "oikodome;" to entreat, encourage and console, "parakleesis;" and to comfort by speaking near and close to a person with the tenderest love and affection, "paramuthia." 1Cor 14v3. This is also one of the main functions of prophetic ministry. The gifts of revelation can reveal, predict and direct, as well as build up, encourage and comfort. The Christian who has the simple gift of prophecy will sometimes manifest gifts of revelation and reveal the secrets of people's hearts, 1Cor 14v23-25, but that does not give them a prophetic office; for it is the continual manifestation of the gifts of revelation, on a high level of authority, that proves a person has this office. There was a considerable difference between the predictive prophetic ministry of Agabus, who foretold a famine and Paul's arrest at Jerusalem, and the prophetic gift of Philip's four daughters. Acts 11v27-30, 21v9,10. Some have no authority to predict like Agabus and must not try. Rom 12v6. Predictions do not come at the will of the prophet, they come at the will of God, to the prophet who stands before, and waits continually on God. 1Pet 1v10-12, 2Pet 1v20,21, 1King 17v1, 18v15, Jer 42v7, Dan 9v3, 10v2. The predictions in the Scriptures are manifestations of words of wisdom and words of knowledge; the simple gift of prophecy only contains prediction when it has words of wisdom and knowledge within it. The person with the prophetic office can also manifest the simple gift of prophecy; David prophesied many times in his psalms to edify, exhort and comfort through his devotional praise psalms; but on other occasions David manifested the gifts of revelation in quite remarkable predictions concerning the life of our Lord. Psalm 22v1-22, 23v1-6, 68v17,18, 110v1, Acts 2v23-36, etc. The prophetic office can also carry a considerable measure of spiritual authority through the gifts of power, which is quite outside the sphere of the simple gift of prophecy.

c) The simple gift of prophecy is a training ground for revelation gifts.

When Paul puts prophecy at the head of the gifts that we should desire, he does so because prophecy edifies and comforts the Church, and can be the channel of the gifts of revelation. 1Cor 14v1. The simple gift of prophecy does not hold the pre-eminent place in the gifts, it is prophecy that contains the mind, purposes and knowledge of God, that is of supreme importance. The simple gift of prophecy opens a door into the Holy Spirit's ministries, and gets a Christian used to receiving revelations from God. The use of the simple gift of prophecy is not only a valuable ministry to the body of Christ, it is a training ground for the reception of the higher revelation gifts, which are received in the same way at the lower levels of revelation. Prophetic office revelation ministry usually starts on the lower levels of, words in the spirit, audible voice, and pictorial visions; however, this can lead to living visions as real as life, visions of angels, and visions of the Lord Jesus and the God the Father, in which outstanding divine purposes are communicated.

d) The prophetic office develops spiritual gifts and ministries in the Church.

The prophetic office has an important place in the reception and development of the simple gift of prophecy and the other spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries. Deut 34v7, 1Kings 19v16-21, 2Kings 2v9, Luke 9v1,2, 10v1-9, Acts 19v1-6, Rom 1v10,11. Christians will not be led into spiritual experiences merely by listening to doctrine, it is not pretty sermons, but spiritual power ministered in love that counts with God. A pulpit can be a means of real self deception, it is only as we minister directly with needy people that our spiritual resources are revealed. Christ preceded and followed his sermons by ministry to those in need, and so should we. A pulpit ministry that never directly ministers to people's needs is an unscriptural delusion, and sheer escapism from Christian responsibility.

2) The Prophetic Office Must Not Be Confused With Preaching Or Teaching.

a) The Old Testament distinguishes a prophet from a teacher or preacher.

The Old Testament prophet was a "nabi," or if a prophetess, a "nebiah;" the prophet was one who allowed God to "flow forth" His thoughts through them; "naba" means "flow forth," sometimes these words were good tidings;

sometimes they were words of warning or judgement; and the true prophets were not afraid to proclaim what God had told them. If a prophet had visions they were also called a seer, a "chozeh," or a "roeh;" In 1Chron 29v29, all three words are found; "the book of Samuel the seer, "roeh," the book of Nathan the prophet, "nabi," and in the book of Gad the seer, "chozeh."" Gesenius says a seer was, "one who sees, i.e., who is taught by visions." In 1Sam 9v9 we read, "Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he spoke thus: 'Come let us go to the seer;' for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer." We will now consider the Hebrew words for prophet and seer in greater detail.

b) The New Testament distinguishes between a prophet and a teacher or preacher.

Those who teach and preach expound God's revealed Word, those who prophesy speak the mind of the Holy Spirit under His direct influence.

Grimm and Thayer in their Lexicon, say on page 553, of "propheeteuo," (to prophesy): "c. To utter forth, declare, a thing which can only be known by divine revelation:-- d. To break forth under sudden impulse in lofty discourse or in praise of the divine counsels." Under the word "propheetees," (prophet) they say on pages 553 and 554; "f. The prophets that appeared in the apostolic age among the Christians:---and in the religious assemblies of the Christians, being suddenly seized by the Spirit, whose promptings, however, do not impair their self-government, 1Cor 14v32, give utterance in glowing and exalted but intelligible language to those things which the Holy Spirit teaches them, and which have power to instruct, comfort, encourage, rebuke, convict, stimulate their hearers."

Bishop Ellicott in his Critical and Grammatical Commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians, (4th. Ed. 1880) writes on 1Thess 5v20, that prophecies were "varied declarations of the divine counsels and expositions of God's oracles, immediately inspired by and emanating from the Holy Spirit.---The difference between ordinary "didache" (the act of teaching, or the teaching, or doctrine) and "propheeteia" (prophecy) consisted in this, that the latter was due to the immediate influence of the Spirit, the former to an "exoikeias dialegesthai," (speaking out of one's own mind)."

Robertson's Lexicon makes the following helpful notes on "propheetees," "prophet." "In Septuagint and New Testament "propheetees" corresponds to Hebrew "nabi," one who speaks from a divine influence, under inspiration, whether as foretelling future events, or as exhorting, reproving, threatening individuals or nations, i.e., as the ambassador of God and the interpreter of His will to men;---With the Jewish use of "nabi" and "propheetees" was connected the idea, that the prophet spoke not his own thoughts, but what he received from God, retaining however his own consciousness and self-possession." page 723.

Robinson, on page 724, goes on to show the difference between prophets and teachers. "They seem to have differed from the "didaskaloi" (teachers) in this, that while the latter spoke in a calm, collected and didactic discourse, adapted to instruct and enlighten the hearers, the prophet spoke more from the impulse of sudden inspiration, from the light of sudden revelation at the moment, "apokalupsis" 1Cor 14v30, and his discourse was probably more adapted by means of powerful exhortations to awaken the feelings and conscience of the hearers. The idea of speaking from an immediate revelation seems here to be fundamental, as relating either to future events or to the mind of the Spirit in general; compare Acts 11v27, 21v10. So Acts 13v1, 1Cor 12v28,29, 14v29,32,37, Eph 2v20, 3v5, 4v11."

The word "propheeteuo," "to prophesy," is never translated as "preach" or "teach" in the Authorised Version, or any other accurate translation. See Matt 7v22, 11v13, 15v7, 26v68, Mark 7v6, 14v65, Luke 1v67, 22v64, John 11v51, Acts 2v17,18, 19v6, 21v9, 1Cor 11 v4,5, 13v9, 14v1,3,4,5,24,31,39, 1Pet 1v10, Jude v14, Rev 10v11, 11v3. Nor is the word "propheeteia," "prophecy," translated as "preaching;" and "propheetees," "prophet," is never translated as "preacher," or "teacher." The words for "teach" and "preach" are not used to speak of a person prophesying, they clearly speak of the telling forth of truth out of the mind by process of thought. There was a great difference between the prophet who told God's thoughts, and a preacher who proclaimed obvious divine wisdom as Solomon did. Solomon was a preacher, a "qoheleth," and his preaching ministry was totally different from a prophetic ministry. Eccles 1v1,2,12, 7v27, 12v8-10. Both preacher and prophet proclaim, but the source of the prophet's message is the direct revelation of the Holy Spirit, the source of the preacher's message is the working of his mind upon known truth. Psalm 40v9, Isaiah 61v1, Neh 6v7, Jonah 3v2. There is no Scriptural basis for saying that "prophecy" is the same as "preaching," they are looked upon as two quite distinct ministries in the Scriptures.

NB The words for "teach" and "preach" are not used to speak of a person prophesying, they clearly speak of the telling forth of truth out of the mind by process of thought.

"Didasko." "To teach," occurs 97 times. "Didaskalos," "teacher," occurs 57 times. In the A.V. it is translated once as

"doctors" in Luke 2v46; five times as "master;" forty one times as "Master;" and ten times as "teacher," or "teachers;" and once as "masters," in James 3v1.

"Katangelo." "To report down," so "proclaim," occurs 17 times, it is not used at all in the Gospels, but ten times in Acts, Acts 4v2, 13v5,38, 15v36, 16v17,21, 17v3,13,23, 26v23.

"Diangelo." "To announce through," so "to declare fully," occurs 3 times, Luke 6v90, Acts 21v26, Rom 9v17.

"Dialegomai." "To dialogue," "to say thoroughly, to converse, discuss, dispute, reason, dialogue," Acts 17v2,17, 18v4,19, 19v8,9, 20v7,9, 24v12,25. (See "suzeeteo," "to reason," Acts 6v9, 9v29)

"Euangelizo-omai." "To tell good news, or good tidings," occurs over 50 times; Only once in Matthew, Matt 5v11; it is not used in Mark or John; but it is used eight times in Luke's Gospel and fifteen times in Acts, Luke 3v18, 4v18,43, 7v22, 8v1, 9v6, 16v16, 20v1, Acts 5v42, 8v4,12,25,35,40, 10v36, 11v20, 13v32, 14v7,15,21, 15v35, 16v10, 17v18. It is a favourite word of Luke for preaching the Gospel. Eph 3v8, etc.

"Kerusso." "To cry or proclaim as an herald," it occurs 61 times; Matt 3v1, 4v17,23, 9v35, 10v7,27, 11v1, 24v14, 26v13; fourteen times in Mark, Mark 1v4,7,14,38,39,45, 3v14, 5v20, 6v12, 7v36, 13v10, 14v9, 16v15,20; nine times in Luke, Luke 3v3, 4v18,19,44, 8v1,39, 9v2, 12v3, 24v47; none in John, eight times in Acts; Acts 8v5, 9v20, 10v37,42, 15v21, 19v13, 20v25, 28v31; Rom 10v8, 1Cor 1v23, Gal 2v2, etc. A preacher is a "keerux," "a herald," it occurs 3 times. 1Tim 2v7 2Tim 1v11, 2Pet 2v5. The word for the message proclaimed by the herald is "keerugma," it occurs eight times. Matt 12v41, Luke 11v32, Rom 16v25, 1Cor 1v21, 2v4, 15v14, 2Tim 4v17, Tit.1v3.

"Laleo." "To talk, say, speak, tell, preach," it can speak of a conversational style of preaching; Matt 9v18, 12v46, 13v3,10,13,33,34, 23v1, John 4v26,27, 6v63, 7v26,46, 8v12,20,25,26,28,30,38,40,44, 12v48,49,50, 14v10,25,30, 15v3,11,22, 16v13,25, Acts 4v1,17,29,30, 5v20,40, 8v25,26, 9v29, 10v44, 13v42,46, 14v25, 16v6, etc.

So we see, the words for preaching or teaching are never used for prophecy or prophesying.

The Hebrew Words For Prophets And Seers.

1) "NABIY." Pronounced "naw-bee." (OT:5030), "Nabiy" is by far the most popular word for prophet in the Old Testament, occurring 309 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. It speaks of a prophet or inspired man, a receiver and speaker of the oracles of God, as he was moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet 1v20,21.

"Naba," (OT:5012); is by far the most popular word for prophesying in the Old Testament, occurring 115 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Prophets allowed God's thoughts "to bubble up, to flow forth from them, and were inspired to prophesy words abundantly, and to speak, or sing, as a prophet."

The prophet's words often revealed the gentle heart of God, their words "distilled and dropped like dew and gentle rain;" "nataph;" (OT:5197), says "nataph," means; "to ooze, i.e., distil gradually; by implication, to fall in drops; and figuratively, to speak by inspiration: drop, prophesy." This word not only shows the gentle side and nature of prophecy; it also reveals that prophecy can come slowly, bit by bit, with pauses, short or long, between the parts of each complete revelation. The prophet Micaiah uses this word to speak strongly against those who prophesy falsely and encourage people to sin. Mic 2v6,11. Sometimes prophets spoke prophecies with strong judgement emphasis, these "severe, hard, and heavy tidings," "qasheh," 1Kings 14v6, (see (OT:7186)) are sometimes called a "burden," "massa," Prov 30v1, 31v1, Isaiah 13v1, 14v28, 15v1, 17v1, etc., Jer 23v33-38, Nah 1v1, Hab 1v1, Zech 9v1, 12v1, Mal 1v1.

Abraham was a prophet and seer, and was shown future events by divine revelation, and he was called a prophet, "nabi," by God in Gen 20v7. Because of His friendship with Abraham, God revealed the coming of Christ and his ministry to him; for Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad." John 8v56. Abraham looked for and waited expectantly for the New Jerusalem, whose Architect and builder was God, because God had told him of it, and revealed it to him. Heb 11v10.

Moses said that he was a prophet, and that God would raise up a prophet like to him, who would be "The Prophet," and whosoever would not listen to him would be destroyed from among the people. Deut 18v10-22. The Lord Jesus was "The Prophet." Act 3v22-24, 7v37,52. See John 1v21,25,29-34. "Are you The Prophet?" "Are you Elijah?" Mal 4v5. Our Lord's ministry was proved by miraculous credentials. Deut 13v1-18. God the Word became God the Son.

Psalms 2v7, 45v6,7, 102v25-27, 110v1, Heb 1v5,8,9. Aaron was the prophet for Moses to Pharaoh; however, Aaron and Miriam had prophetic ministries in their own right, and God said that they were co-deliverers of Israel from Egypt with Moses. Micah 6v4, Exod 4v10-16, 6v28-30, 7v1,2, Numb 12v1-8. See Ezek 20v4-49.

Samuel was a prophet, and it seems that his ministry had caused a resurgence of prophetic ministry, for when he was a child the word of the Lord was rare and precious, (Hebrew "yaqar,") in those days, there was no frequent or widespread, (Hebrew "parats,") vision, (Hebrew "chazown," "a dream, a vision, a revelation"). By the time Samuel was an old man, 1Sam 7v15, 8v1, there were groups of prophets in the land, who could prophesy to music. 1Sam 10v5-13. These ministries had obviously been brought about and inspired by the ministry and spiritual influence of Samuel at the command of God.

Elijah and Elisha formed groups who were called "the sons of the prophets:" this could mean that their fathers were prophets and that they caught the prophetic fire; for there were many prophets in Israel with a considerably less powerful ministry than the ministries of Elijah and Elisha. 1Kings 18v4, 19v10,14. It could also mean that the "sons of the prophets" were young men who were trained by the prophets, as Elijah trained Elisha. 1Kings 19v16-21. See 1Kings 20v35-43. Paul called Timothy and Titus his sons; 1Tim 1v2, 2Tim 2v1, Titus 1v4; and this could be the thought behind the sons of the prophets, each ministry is expected to reproduce itself in spiritual children, and prophets should produce prophetic children. It appears that at Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho, there were groups, or schools, of "the sons of the prophets" under training for the prophetic office, by Elijah and Elisha and other prophets with a mature prophetic ministry. 1Kings 2v1,3,5,7,15, 4v38-44. God often met the material needs of His prophets and their dependants by supernatural miracles of provision. 1Kings 17v1-24, 2Kings 4v1-7,38-44, 7v1-20.

The word "nabiy" is also used of false prophets, their motives for prophesying falsely were usually popularity or mercenary gain. Isaiah 28v7-13, Jer 13v14, 27v4-22, 28v5-17. The word is used of the false evil prophets of Baal and Ashteroth, who corrupted and troubled Israel. 1Kings 18v19,40, 2Kings 10v19, Hos 4v5, 9v7,8. (The word "neba," an Aramaic noun, only occurs in Ezra 5v1; and "nebly," a masculine Aramaic noun, only occurs in Ezra 5v1,2 and 6v14. "Nebuah," occurs in 2Chron 9v29, 15v8, Neh.6v12)

The Feminine form of "nabi" is "nebiyah." It occurs six times in the Old Testament; five times of good prophets; Miriam, in Exodus 15v20; Deborah, in Judges 4v4; Huldah, in 2Kings 22v14 and 2Chron 34v22; Isaiah's wife, Isaiah 8v3; and once of the false prophetess Noadiah, in Neh 6v14, who prophesied falsely for financial gain. In Neh 6v12-14 we see that Tobiah and Sanballat hired Noadiah and Shemaiah the son of Delaiah and other prophets, to prophesy falsely that Nehemiah's life was in danger, to make Nehemiah afraid. cf. v5-19. It was true that Nehemiah's life was under constant threat from his enemies Sanballat and Tobiah, but these false prophets tried to produce fear and unbelief, and their prophecies were given in a spirit of gloom, doom, bitter criticism, and unbelief. A statement can be true, but if it attacks faith and discourages God's children, it can be evil and have evil effects, and become a false revelation; like the report of the ten spies, who were overcome by the problems of possessing Canaan, and left God out of the reckoning, and died for it. Numb 13v1 to 14v38.

2) "ROEH." (OT:7203). It is the masculine active participle of "raah," pronounced "raw-aw," (OT:7200); a primitive root which means "to see," either literally or figuratively. The word "roeh," means a seer, prophet, vision or oracle; it shows the means whereby prophetic revelation was communicated to the prophet of God. In 1Sam 9v9 we read, "Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, come let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer." A "roeh." This shows that prophets were taught by God through visions, and a person cannot be a prophet without having a continual vision ministry. "Roeh" is applied to Samuel in 1Sam 9v9,11,19, 1Chron 9v22, 26v28, 29v29; and Hanani the seer, in 2Chron 16v7,10 and 19v2; also see Isaiah 30v10, "which say to the seer; see not."

30 "CHOZEH." Pronounced "kho-zeh." (OT:2374). It is a beholder in vision; a seer. a prophet, an astrologer. The word "chozeh" occurs 22 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, on eleven of these occasions it is linked with people to whom God had given a prophetic ministry. David was surrounded by seers, and this is one of the major reasons for the remarkable blessing of God on David's kingdom; David wanted and sought the guidance and blessing of God, and let the divinely given ministries function as God intended them to. Gad, David's seer, 2Sam 24v11, 1Chron 21v9, 29v29, 2Chron 29v25; Heman, the king's seer, 1Chron 25v5; Iddo, 2Chron 9v29, 12v15; Hanani, 2Chron 19v2; Asaph, 2Chron 29v25, the leader of worship in David's time, 1Chron 16v5,37, with Heman, 1Chron 25v1-5, two seers directing worship; Jeduthan, with Heman, the king's seer, 2Chron 35v15. Amos, Amos 7v12. "Chozeh" is also used to speak of seers in general, 2Kings 17v13, 2Chron 33v18,19, Isaiah 29v10, in Isaiah 30v10 it is translated "prophets" in Authorised Version; and of false prophets that "see" vanity and peace where there is none, Ezek 13v9,16, 22v28, Micah 3v5-7; and stargazers, Isaiah 47v13, and those who make an "agreement," "chozeh," with Sheol, Isaiah

28v15..

4) "MALAK." Pronounced "mal-awk." (OT:4397). It is from a root that means to dispatch as a deputy, it could be used of ordinary messengers, but it is especially used for messengers of God; i.e. an angel, prophet, priest, Mal 2v7, or teacher. It is an ambassador, sent with a commission and representing the sender. In the Authorised Version "malak" is translated "ambassadors," 4 times; "messenger," or "messengers," 98 times; "angel," or "angels," 111 times. The children of God continually rejected God's prophetic messengers, until there was no remedy; and judgement became inevitable, and seventy years in captivity followed their rebellion. 2Chron 36v15-21. In 2Chron 36v15,16, "messengers" is "malak." Haggai is called "the Lord's messenger," in Hag 1v13. In Mal 3v1, John Baptist is called "My messenger," this is quoted four times in the New Testament, in Matt 11v10, Mark 1v2, Luke 1v76 and 7v27, and in this same verse the Lord Jesus is called "the Lord," and "the messenger of the covenant."

NB "Yahweh Malak," Jehovah Messenger.

In Isaiah 48v12-16 and Zech 2v8-11, we read of one Jehovah being sent by another Jehovah, and in Mal 3v1 we read of Jehovah sending "the true Lord" as His messenger. In John 1v18 we read that no man has seen God at any time, this undoubtedly means that no man has seen the glory of the Father in all His unveiled fullness, power and glory; however, the Lord Jesus has manifested and declared the Father's character and glory. John 14v7-11, 17v6,26. In the Old Testament many manifestations of Jehovah were undoubtedly the manifestations of God the Word revealing Himself to mankind before His incarnation. In these revelations Christ is called Jehovah, and yet, because the Father has sent Him, Christ is sometimes called "Yahweh Malak," "Jehovah Messenger." The words "Yahweh Malak," translated in the Authorised Version as "angel of the Lord," are better translated "Yahweh Messenger;" as Bishop Horsley states: -

"The term "Angel of the Lord," which so often occurs in the English Bible, is so ill conformed to the original that, it is to be feared, it has led many into the error of conceiving of "the Lord," as one person, and of "the Angel" as another. The word of the Hebrew, ill rendered "the Lord," is not, like the English word, an appellative, expressing rank or condition, but it is the proper name Jehovah. And this proper name is not, in the Hebrew, a genitive after the noun substantive "Angel," as the English represents it; but the words "Jehovah" and "Angel" are two substantive nouns in apposition, both speaking of the same person, the one by the appropriate name of essence, the other by the title of office. "Jehovah angel" would be a better rendering." End of quote.

This is why Moses was very sad, when, after the idolatry of Israel at Sinai, the personal guidance and presence of the Lord was withdrawn, and the Lord said "mine angel shall go before thee." Exodus 32v1-35. NB v34, 14v19,24, 23v20-23, 33v2. "Mine angel," could be "His angel," Gen 24v7,40, Dan 3v28, 6v22; and "the angel of His presence," Isaiah 63v9; the angel who is the special messenger of Christ, and was trusted to impart to John, the prophecies, encouragements, and warnings in the book of Revelation. Rev 1v1, 22v16. This shows the great importance of God sending angelic ministry to take away the spiritual evil defences and fortresses of evil angelic power. 2Cor 10v1-10, Eph 6v10-22. Caleb knew that God's promise of angelic ministry being sent before Israel, meant that the evil angelic defence of the nations they would fight was taken away, and so Israel was sure to conquer. Numb 14v6-10. Moses, however, was not content with just angelic messengers, as good and blessed as this was; he wanted and pleaded for the personal presence of Yahweh to go with Him, and to see His glory, both were granted to him. Exod.33v12-23.

There can be no doubt that "Jehovah Messenger," was the pre-incarnate Christ, the messenger of the Father; He spoke as God in the first person. These manifestations of "Jehovah Messenger," are clearly distinct from visitations by ordinary angelic messengers.

a) To Hagar in the wilderness. Gen 16v3-16. It was Jehovah who spoke to her, she called Him, "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees." v7,9,10,11,13, cf. Gen 21v9-21, Gal 4v21-31. NB Gen 16v7-11, Hagar's promise.

b) To Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Gen 18v1-33. NB v1,17,19,20,22,25,26,33. Moses records that Abraham talked with the Lord Jesus as a Theophany, (which means the appearance of God in the appearance of an angel or in human form). We read that Jehovah came to Abraham looking like a man with two others, who are later declared to be angels. Gen 18v1,22 with 19v1,15. The Lord has a meal with Abraham, and promises Abraham a child within a year.

The angels then went to Sodom and rescued Lot, and destroyed Sodom. Gen 18v22, 19v1,13,22. Note how Lot's sons in law thought the warning of judgement and destruction was a joke. Gen 19v14. Christ is here called "the Judge of the whole earth." Moses states that after Jehovah finished talking about the destruction of Sodom, "then Jehovah

went on His way." Gen 18v22,25,33. See John 5v22.

c) In Gen 22v11-18 God tests Abraham. Yahweh Malak speaks in the first person as Jehovah and Abraham calls the name of that place. "Jehovah Jireh." Gen 22v1,11,14-18.

d) In Gen 31v11-13, Yahweh Malak says that He is the God of Bethel. God directs Jacob to leave Laban and return to the land of his kindred; and in Gen 32v24-32 Jacob wrestles at Peniel with God.

e) To Moses at the burning bush at Horeb. Exodus 3v1-16, "Jehovah Messenger," in v2, is called "Jehovah" and "God" in v4. The person in the burning bush was Christ.

f) Balaam and his ass and Christ. Numb 22v9-35.

g) Joshua 5v13 to 6v3. The Captain of the Lord's of hosts visits Joshua, His presence made the ground holy. Judg 2v1-4.

h) Judges 6v11-25. Gideon and Yahweh Malak.

i) Judges 13v1-25. Manoah and his wife, Yahweh Malak and Samson.

j) 1Sam 3v1-21. Samuel's childhood visitation.

k) 1Chron 21v1-30. NB v12,18,30, and 2Sam 24v16. David sins in numbering Israel.

l) 1Kings 19v5-7 and 2Kings 1v3,15, Elijah.

m) Psalm 34v7, 35v5,6. Defence is promised for God's children.

n. 2Kings 19v35 and Isaiah 37v36-38, Sennacherib's army destroyed.

o) Zech 1v9-19. The nations at ease.

p) Zech 3v1-10. Joshua the high priest in filthy garments.

q) Zech 4v1. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

There were a wide variety of words and acts from Yahweh Malak, He gave promises, threats of judgement, and mighty acts of judgement, He destroyed all of Sennacherib's army.

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