



Therefore, I will always remind you about these things—even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth you have been taught.

2 Peter 1:12 NLT

The gift of prophecy is probably the most misunderstood of all.

There are two primary characteristics of an Old Testament prophet.

Then Haggai, the Lord's messenger, gave the people this message from the Lord: "I am with you, says the Lord!" Haggai 1:13 NLT

First, he had to be the Lord's messenger sent by God.

This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let your prophets and fortune-tellers who are with you in the land of Babylon trick you. Do not listen to their dreams, because they are telling you lies in my name. I have not sent them," says the Lord. Jeremiah 29:8–9 NLT

Secondly, a true Old Testament prophet had to speak the Lord's message. That message was not his own—it was God's.

Instead, they have told lies and made false predictions. They say, 'This message is from the Lord,' even though the Lord never sent them. And yet they expect him to fulfill their prophecies! Can your visions be anything but false if you claim, 'This message is from the Lord,' when I have not even spoken to you? Ezekiel 13:6–7 NLT

For example, in 2 Kings 20:1–6, Isaiah delivered God's message to King Hezekiah. After Hezekiah prayed, God sent Isaiah back with a new message:

"I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I will heal you..." (2 Kings 20:5, NLT).

Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people. Again they all responded, "We will do everything the Lord has commanded. We will obey." Exodus 24:7 NLT

Balaam replied, "Look, now I have come, but I have no power to say whatever I want. I will speak only the message that God puts in my mouth."
Numbers 22:38 NLT

The Lord gave Balaam a message for King Balak. Then he said, "Go back to Balak and give him my message." Numbers 23:5 NLT

But Balaam replied, "I will speak only the message that the Lord puts in my mouth."
Numbers 23:12 NLT

But Balaam replied to Balak, "Didn't I tell you that I can do only what the Lord tells me?"
Numbers 23:26 NLT

According to Numbers 24, the Spirit of God came upon Balaam, and he entered, what Scripture describes as a prophetic trance while receiving God's message.

If the prophet speaks in the Lord's name but his prediction does not happen or come true, you will know that the Lord did not give that message. That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared. Deuteronomy 18:22 NLT

The purpose was to preserve the purity and authority of God's revealed Word.

Peter confirms this in 2 Peter 1:20–21 (NLT)

²⁰ Above all, you must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, ²¹ or from human initiative. No, those prophets were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

Likewise, Paul writes:

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives."

(2 Timothy 3:16 NLT)

The phrase "inspired by God" literally means "God-breathed." Scripture is the result of God speaking through human instruments.

Jesus Himself declared,

"Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth." (John 17:17, NLT)

Truth does not change.

Culture changes. Opinions change. Society changes.

But God's Word remains the same.

There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12 NLT

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT