Don’t Be Fooled! 5 Biblical Signs of True Prophets

In a time when the prophetic movement has seen its fair share of controversy and disappointment, many believers are left asking: Who can we trust?

It’s a valid question. After years of hit-or-miss prophecies, public failures and even deception, it’s easy to feel jaded. But before we throw the baby out with the bathwater, we should remember that God is still raising up true prophetic voices in the earth today.

Jeremiah Johnson, a well-known prophetic minister, recently spoke about this very issue, laying out five clear indicators of prophets we should listen to.

“My heart right now,” he says, “is that even though there’s been a lot of exposure, even though there’s been a lot of heartbreak in the prophetic movement, I want to assure you that God is still raising up true prophets.”

Breaking News. Spirit-Filled Stories. Subscribe to Charisma on YouTube now!

So, how do we recognize them?

1. They Carry a Burden for the Church

True prophets aren’t in the business of personal fame or feel-good messages. They are “burden bearers” who call the church to prayer, repentance, holiness and the fear of the Lord. “Prophets build altars in the Earth today,” Johnson says. “When you get around real prophets, you’re stirred to pray, to consecrate yourself.” If a so-called prophet’s message is all about hype and lacks a call to holiness, be cautious.

2. They Strengthen the Church and Make Disciples

Prophets are not fortune tellers predicting the future. Their primary role is to strengthen the body of Christ. “In Acts 15:32, prophets are operating in the church, giving a lengthy message and strengthening the body of Christ,” Johnson points out. He warns against voices who operate in isolation, only building online platforms without accountability. “Some of the healthiest and safest prophets I know are rooted in a local community, strengthening the body.”

/**/

3. They Teach People to Hear God for Themselves

A true prophet does not create an unhealthy dependence on their words. Instead, they empower others to hear God’s voice. “Steer away from prophets who create an ungodly dependence upon their voice,” Johnson warns. He reminds us that in the Old Testament, prophets were the only way people heard from God. But under the New Covenant, Jesus is our Mediator. “The blood of the New Covenant is that we may all know the Lord, from the least to the greatest.”

4. They Prepare the Church for Christ’s Return

The most important reality a prophet should point to is eternity. Johnson challenges believers: “If Jesus were to come back tonight, are you certain where you would spend eternity?” Prophets should be calling people not just to personal breakthroughs but to readiness for the second coming of Christ. “I recommend prophets who preach on the Judgment Seat of Christ, who are preparing people for eternity.”

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up-to-date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

5. They Live with Integrity and Love Their Families

It's easy to be impressed by someone's prophetic accuracy, but what about their character?

"In Matthew 7, they'll say, 'Lord, Lord, we prophesied in your name,' and He will say, 'I never knew you.'" Johnson emphasizes that integrity is more important than gifting. "Look at their marriage. Do they love their spouse? Are their kids healthy?" If a prophet is reckless in their personal life, their words—no matter how accurate—should not be trusted.

At the end of the day, we don't need to fear the prophetic, but we do need discernment.

"The need for authentic, healthy prophets has never been greater," Johnson says. It's time to return to purity, accountability and a prophetic movement that actually look like Jesus.

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!

James Lasher *is staff writer for Charisma Media.*