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When a prophet tells you what you want to hear, you should sense danger.

# By Their Fruit

## Testing Prophets & Prophecy

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### Recognize a prophet or prophecy as false if he or it:

1. **Contradicts Scripture** (Isaiah 8.20; 1Cor. 14.37,38).
2. **Proves untrue** (Deut. 18.22).
3. **Draws people away from the true and triune God** (Deut. 13.1-5; Mat. 7.15-23). Neither accurate predictions, nor accompanying signs and wonders validate a prophet who promotes idolatry and rebellion.
4. **Turns people away from their God-appointed authorities** (Rom. 13.1-5; Eph. 5.22; Heb. 13.17). A prophet who discourages people from heeding the godly counsel of their pastors and family is a predator cutting sheep out from the flock to make them vulnerable (Acts 20.29,30). A supposed prophet who does not submit to local church authority himself is a rebel to be shunned.
5. **Solicits money** (2Pet. 2.14,15). The first-century Christians would not heed any supposed apostle or prophet who even appeared to “minister” for personal gain. They recorded their rule on this in the 11th chapter

of the document known as *The Didache*:

(3) Now concerning the apostles and prophets, deal with them as follows in accordance with the rule of the gospel. (4) Let every apostle who comes to you be welcomed as if he were the Lord. (5) But he is not to stay for more than one day, unless there is need, in such case he may stay another. But if he stays three days, he is a false prophet. (6) And when the apostle leaves, he is to take nothing except bread until he finds his next night's lodging. But if he asks for money, he is a false prophet.”

Any kind of covetousness, whether for financial gain or for titles or prestige, mark a prophet as false. Any prophecy that is self-serving is likewise to be dismissed.

6. **Appeals to the selfish desires of the audience** (2Tim. 3.6; 2Pet. 2.18). When a prophet tells you exactly what you want to hear, you should sense danger. If God wishes you to know that He is sending you some wonderful temporal blessing, He is willing confirm it by two or three witnesses; have predictions of personal prosperity thoroughly tested (1Cor. 14.29).

**Receive a prophet or prophecy if he or it:**

1. **Conforms to the Scriptures.**
2. **Draws people to the God of the Bible.** True prophecy encourages people to draw near to God and His Son Jesus Christ by repentance and obedience (1Kings 18.37).
3. **Encourages submission to authority and to godly counsel.** A prophet who himself submits to and remains accountable to local church authority is the only kind of prophet who deserves credence.
4. **Reveals a heart broken by the things that grieve God.** Jesus and the biblical prophets often mourned over the sins of their people and over the judgments they foresaw (Jer. 9.1; Luke 19.41).
5. **Promotes servanthood.** A true prophet sets an example of serving others (Mat. 23.11; Luke 22.24-27).
6. **Appeals to the conscience** (2Cor 4.2; 5.11). 🙏