

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Master of Divinity Thesis

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

5-1-1981

The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament

Kevin Popp

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_poppk@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/mdiv>

Digital Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)
Commons

Network

Recommended Citation

Popp, Kevin, "The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament" (1981). *Master of Divinity Thesis*. 126.
<https://scholar.csl.edu/mdiv/126>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Divinity Thesis by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for elective
EN-200

by

Kevin Popp

May 1981


Advisor

Gift

BS
2545
P72
P62

132780

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. SECULAR GREEK 3

 Etymological Considerations 3

 The Greek Oracle 4

 Summary of Secular Greek 6

III. PROPHET AND PROPHECY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT .. 8

 Derivation of the word Prophet 8

 Prophet and Seer 9

 Mark of the Old Testament Prophet 10

 Types of Prophets 10

 Prophetic Proclamation 12

 False Prophets 13

IV. THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD 14

 Apocalyptic and Prophecy 14

 The Rabbinic Tradition 15

 Prophets in the Intertestamental Period . . 16

V. SURVEY OF NEW TESTAMENT USAGE 18

 _____ 18

 _____ 19

 _____ 19

 _____ 21

 _____ 21

VI. PRE-CHRISTIAN PROPHETS 22

 Zachariah 22

 Elizabeth 22

 Simeon 23

 Anna 23

 John the Baptist 24

VII.	JESUS AS PROPHET	27
	The View of New Testament Scholarship	27
	Biblical Evidence	27
	Conclusion	30
VIII.	PROPHETS AND PROPHECY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH	31
	The Nature of Christian Prophecy	31
	A Comparison with Old Testament Prophecy	32
	A Pneumatic gift	34
	Prophecy and the Charismata of knowledge and Tongues	35
	Prophecy and Exhortation	36
	A Comparison of Luke and Paul	38
	The Prophet and other Offices	42
	The Christian Prophet and Revelation	47
	False Prophets	50
IX.	PROPHECY IN THE EARLY CHURCH	54
X.	CONCLUSION	56
	FOOTNOTES	58
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	61

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

During the past several years there has been increasing awareness of and concern for the use of those gifts of the Holy Spirit which the New Testament calls "spiritual gifts." Within the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod seminars have been held, Bible studies have been published,¹ and many pastors are exhorting their congregations to discover their spiritual gifts. At the same time, it has been the experience of many, including this author, that there is a general lack of solid exegetical material written from a ~~C~~ Confessional view point on the subject.

The purpose of this study is not to provide a thorough treatment of all spiritual gifts, but to concentrate on one such gift and trace it through the entire witness of Scripture. It is hoped that this method will contribute to the overall understanding of spiritual gifts and provide a basis for continuing study.

In his discussion on spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 14, St. Paul states that prophecy is greater than tongues. It is the wish of St. Paul that all should prophecy in

verse 24. In the conclusion of Chapter 12, St. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to "earnestly desire the higher gifts" of which he lists prophets immediately following apostles. On this account, the gift of prophecy is the topic of this study. The method will be to examine prophets as well as prophecy and the related word group from the witness of both the New and Old Testaments with a special emphasis on gaining an understanding of New Testament prophets and prophecy.

CHAPTER TWO

SECULAR GREEK

The Greek noun prophet, προφήτης, is made of the stem φη-, "to say," "to proclaim," with a religious connotation plus the prefix προ- which as a temporal adverb has the meaning of "before," or "in advance." This is confirmed by πρόφημι which means "to predict," "to proclaim in advance." However, πρόφημι is not found until the Christian era, and therefore has no value as etymological evidence.

Other compounds formed with the prefix προ- have the meaning "to declare openly" or "to make known publicly." For example, προαγορεύω is "to proclaim publicly in the people's assembly." προφονεύω is "to proclaim aloud," "to order publicly." "This idea of publicly declaring and making known gives προφήτης the sense of 'one who proclaims,' 'speaker'."² προαγορεύω can also have the temporal meaning "in advance." (Xenophon Sym. 4. 5). Whenever future forms are the object of these verbs they can have an exclusive temporal sense of "fore." The use of the verbs having the prefix προ-, προαγορεύω, προφονεύω, and προλέγω, meaning to proclaim openly, would suggest

that Προφητεύω should be translated in the same manner. The religious connotation implied in the stem φη- gives the word special weight and expresses a special authority which the prophet can claim for his word.

II. The Greek Oracle

The Public life of the Greek prophet demonstrates his true nature more readily than etymological considerations. The words Προφήτης and Προφήτις were bound up with the Greek oracle. It was at the oracle that the prophet/ess would exercise his/her function. The most famous of these oracles was the one found at Delphi over which the god Apollos presided. At Delphi the female known as the Pythia was known by the title Προφήτις and Πρόμαντις. The title Πρόμαντις had in view the disclosure of the future while Προφήτις meant that the Pythia became a voice or "speaking tube" of the god who inspired her. "The term Προφήτις seems to imply that sometimes the Pythia herself could declare the answer of the god to those who sought counsel."³

Originally the office of Pythia belonged to one to three girls drawn from the general population and in later times belonged to elderly women. The Pythia would sit upon a tripod covering an opening in the ground from which smoke arose. The smoke was known as an "oracular spirit" (πνεῦμα μάντικόν) and gave the Pythia her inspiration. In addition to the smoke, the Pythia chewed bay leaves (the

plant of Apollo) and as a result would proclaim the oracle with inarticulate sounds, thought to be similiar to glos-solalia.

The προφήτης must be distinguished from the μάντις (seer, soothsayer). Although both titles may have been held by the same individuals, the functions are very different. The derivation of μάντις is μαίνωμαι, "to rage," "to be out of one's senses," "to be in ecstasy." This suggests that the soothsayer is one who makes a proclamation from the state of ecstasy. Whereas the content of prophecy can deal with religious concerns, the content of soothsaying never concerns the religious realm. The chief impulse behind soothsaying was human curiosity.

In Addition to the προφήταις, some oracle personel were designated προφήτης. While the Pythia spoke in ecstasy, it was the prophet's task to put the Pythia's sayings in official form without altering the content and to declare it to the one seeking advice. Apollo, the god of the oracle at Delphi, was himself called Διὸς Προφήτης.

There was a distinction between προφήτης and μάντις at the Delphic oracle. "Apollon is a μάντις who has received his gift of divination from Zeus, but he is also the Διὸς Προφήτης for he imparts the will of Zeus to the Pythia."⁴ The προφήτης was the one who proclaimed the oracle.

The visitors of the Pythia were those who were baffled

by a problem which might concern matters of business, religion, politics, and the whole gamut of life in the ancient world. The visitors would present their questions to the Pythia, often in writing, and the Pythia would answer in the form of instruction, often concerning future events. Since the answer of the Pythia was usually incomprehensible to the visitor, there was a need for a translator. The translators were wise and highly respected men who were known as Προφήτης. Since they did not receive the additional title of Μάντις, they did not receive their information by direct inspiration. They never spoke by their own initiative, but only after the Pythia had uttered her oracle. They received the oracle, completed and interpreted it, and formulated the final saying in intelligible language.

Helmut Kraëmer, writing in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, makes the following observations concerning Προφήτης and Προφήτις from the oracle at Delphi:

- (a) It denotes men and women and their work, which is to declare something whose content is not derived from themselves but from the god who reveals his will at the particular sites.
- (b) The oracle prophet proclaims the will and counsel of the god in answer to questions and with reference to the particular situation of the one who asks for advice.
- (c) The oracle prophets and prophetesses of Greece are chosen for their ministry by men and not by the god.⁵

III. Summary

For the purposes of this study, the following should

be noted concerning the prophet in secular Greek:

1. The prophet is not responsible for the content of what he proclaims since he received it indirectly from the god. The prophets are thus "interpreters of mysterious utterances and visions."⁶

2. The advice of the prophet is given only at the initiative of the one seeking it.

3. The situation to which the Greek prophet addresses himself is always a unique, concrete, present situation of the one seeking advice.

4. The prophet is not called to his office by a god, but by the oracular institution.

CHAPTER THREE

PROPHECY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. Derivation of the Word Prophet

The Hebrew word for prophet in the Old Testament, נָבִיא, is usually considered to be derived from the Addadian verb nabu meaning "to call," "to proclaim." The Akkadian word has an active sense which parallels the Greek usage of προφήτης, but also has a passive sense of "one called," "one appointed." In this passive sense, God is the agent, the One who calls.

There is not a single instance in which the LXX uses a word other than προφήτης to translate נָבִיא. The Hebrew verb נִבֵּא means to show, present, or express oneself, "to speak as a prophet." It is found in both the niphil and the hithpael. Rendtorff makes the suggestion that in the earlier books of the Old Testament, נִבֵּא is used in the hithpael for ecstatic states. The niphil is used to denote prophetic speech.⁷ In the Historical writings the niphil dominates (cf. I Sam. 10:5 f.; 19:20; I Kings 22:10, 12). In most cases it is to be translated "to speak prophetically." It has been suggested that in early times prophecy was dominated by ecstatic speech or behavior. For a time

this became suspect, but later (from Jeremiah onward) the verb no longer had an ecstatic connotation and could be used without embarrassment.⁸

A distinction in the use of the noun can also be found in earlier and later Old Testament texts. In the earlier texts the prophet can also have the title אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם (א) אֱלֹהִים, man of God. This title is reserved for great leaders and expresses a close association with God. While in earlier texts the prophet can include widely varying types of persons, in later texts it is reserved for one who speaks on behalf of Yahweh. Included among the figures in the history of Israel to whom was given the title אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם were Abraham (Gen. 20:7), Moses (Deut. 34:10), and Aaron (Ex. 15:20) which may be linked to her Song at the Red Sea following the escape from the Pharaoh.

II. Prophet and Seer

As with secular Greek, there is a distinction in the Old Testament between prophet and seer. The seer has the ability to predict future events (I Sam. 9:6-20), with emphasis on visions, while the prophet's emphasis is on words (Is. 30:10).

The common feature of the אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם is that they speak by a commission from Yahweh. In I Sam. 3:19 it is recognized that Samuel is commissioned a אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם because Yahweh does not let any of His words fall to the ground. It is said of the prophets that Yahweh has sent His word through them and thus they use phrases such as:

רוח יהוה / רוח הנביא (I Kings 16:7,12; II Kings 14:25). In the Old Testament the Spirit of Yahweh is the source of the prophets inspiration. "In the Targums the spirit of prophecy could be identified with the Spirit and makes its recipients 'friends of God and prophets.'" (Wis. 7:27).⁹

III. Mark of the Old Testament Prophet

In ~~the~~ Old Testament prophecy the decisive feature of the content is the דבר, the word. The prophet proclaims the word which he receives from Yahweh. For instance, at the call of Jeremiah, Yahweh puts His words on the lips of Jeremiah in the form of coals (Jer. 1:9). Even so, Jeremiah does not have Yahweh's words until they are given to him. When he does, he must speak the ^{word} (cf. Jer. 28:11,12). The prophets, however, are not passive instruments in the sense that they are involuntary. They are responsible for the word which they pass on and the correct delivery of their message. Thus they often provide an explanation in which the sin of those addressed is demonstrated.

IV. Types of Old Testament Prophets

Only in two cases in the Old Testament do any prophets have an obvious institution connection, Gad and Nathan. In spite of their court connection, Gad and Nathan pronounce the judgment of Yahweh in II Samuel 12. The prophet is completely independent to speak the word of Yahweh. This freedom on the part of the prophet is very different from

the oracle prophet in the Greek world.

In Numbers 11:25-29 seventy elders are said to have "prophesied." Evidently they had gone into a state of ecstasy, for Joshua pleads for Moses to forbid them. However, Moses replied: "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit on them" (Num. 11:29). Among the earlier forms of prophets in the Old Testament was a group of ecstasies who used musical instruments in order to put themselves into a trance and, in such a condition, babbled their messages. It was against this background of infectious ecstasy that Saul came to be counted "among the prophets" (I Sam. 10:5ff.).

Another form of prophets gathered into groups of prophetic communities. These groups would gather around prominent figures such as Elisha and Elijah (II Kings 2:1ff.). In these groups the Spirit manifested himself mostly by the working of miracles (II Kings 2:19-20; 2:23-25; 4:1-7, 18-37). Even these accounts which emphasize miraculous deeds reveal that Elisha was also a man of the word who gave spiritual counsel (II Kings 4:1-7; 8:37; 5:1-14).

While no sharp line can be drawn, prophecy associated with the prophetic literature of the Old Testament began in Israel with the monarchy. Ecstasy, soothsaying, and miracle working become less significant and the word comes to the fore.

V. Prophetic Proclamation

Interpretation of Scripture as an activity of a prophet was first explicitly ascribed to Daniel (9:2-24) where he gives an interpretation of Jeremiah 29. Possibly it may be inferred also in other Old Testament texts where a prophet reuses phrases or terminology of another text (cf. Jer. 48:45 with Num. 21:28; 24:17; also Jer. 50-51 with Is. 13-14). According to the Targum on Judges 5:9, Deborah, under prophetic inspiration "did not cease to give exposition of the Torah."¹⁰

The proclamation of the word in the Old Testament prophets include two major themes:

1. Prophecy of Judgment This prophecy was predominate before the exile when the prophet's task was to warn of the impending judgment, although they were not limited to only judgment. The theme of this prophecy was characterized by "weal and woe." The prophet's task was not only to forewarn of the impending captivity (and thus judgment), but also to explain the sin of the nation, king, or group within the nation. Thus, the prophets were responsible for exhorting, counseling, and preaching with a view toward repentance.

2. Prophecy of Salvation In contrast to the prophecies of judgment which were brought about by the wrong behavior of men, prophecies of salvation were based on the loving will of God. Prophecies of salvation predominate, though not exclusively, after the exile and become a reality in the renewal

of the relationship between Israel and God and in the eschatological king, the Messiah.

By way of summary, the Old Testament Prophet was a proclaimer of the word of Yahweh. He was called by God to warn, exhort, comfort, teach and counsel. His prophecies were bound only to God and not to the satisfaction of those to whom he was preaching.

VI. False Prophets

In Contrast to the prophet, the Old Testament speaks also of "false prophets," particularly in Deuteronomy 13:2-6. A false prophet may be defined as "one who summons to the worship of gods other than Yahweh." The false prophet is to be regarded as an enemy of Yahweh and put to death. The death penalty is extended to cover any אִי־נִבֵּא who speaks in Yahweh's name without a commission from Yahweh in Deuteronomy 18:20. The criterion to distinguish true from false prophets is the fulfillment of the prophecy (vs. 22). In explanation of this criterion, Jeremiah demanded subsequent validation only from those prophets who foretold salvation and not from those pronouncing judgment (Jer. 28).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

Following the return of the remnant to Israel and the close of the Old Testament canon with Malachai, the next four hundred years preceding Christ was marked by a series of political intrigues and a general lack of hope on the part of the people of Israel. Prophets and prophecy gradually began to play a reduced role in the life of the people. In a sense, the prophet was replaced by the Scribe and Rabbi. Prophecy, as a literary form was gradually replaced by apocalyptic literature.

I. Apocalyptic and Prophecy

Apocalyptic literature is characterized by: (1) an emphasis on Eschatology; (2) the use of symbolic language; (3) the use of dualistic concepts; (4) pseudonymity of the author; (5) and visionary experiences of the author. The main difference between apocalyptic literature and the classical prophets is that while the prophets addressed themselves to the coming of the Messianic rule, the apoclayptic writers had given up on the Messiah; the only hope was for the new age, the parousia. D. S. Russel, in Between the Testaments makes the following

observation of the apocalyptic writers: "The apocalyptic writers believed that they stood in the true prophetic tradition of the Old Testament Scriptures and were convinced that like the prophets of Old, they too had a message from God."¹¹

II. The Rabbinic Tradition

The Rabbinic tradition, which reflects a great deal of the theological thought during this period, had two principles regarding prophets and prophecy:

According to Mar Shemuel (d. 245 A.D.) no prophet has the right to say anything which is not contained in the Torah. According to R. Jehoshua b. Levi (c. 250 A.D.) Moses spoke already all the words of the prophets and everything prophesied later derives from the prophecy of Moses.¹²

The first principle was that the prophets did not have the same status in the canon as the Torah. One might also note that this quote also expresses the view that the Old Testament prophets were expositors of Scripture.

The second principle in the Rabbinic tradition was the affinity between prophecy and wisdom. Both prophets and wise men belong to a group bearing the "oral law" which is briefly summarized in Seler Olam rabba: "Up to now (the time of Alexander the Great) the prophets prophesied in the Holy Spirit. From now onward incline thine ear and hear the words of the wise."¹³ From this quote we can see that the Rabbis naturally saw in the wisdom of the apocalyptic literature the successor of prophecy.

Even though the Rabbinic period saw apocalyptic liter-

ature as successor to prophecy and the wise (σοφία) as the replacement of the prophet, the concept of a charismatic, pneumatic prophet would not have been foreign to Palestine in Jesus' day. Josephus in Antiquities 12. 345 reports that the Essenes held prophecy in high regard with emphasis on the interpretation of dreams with Daniel as the basis.¹⁴

over?
Philo discussed the nature of prophetic inspiration with extraordinary frequency, perhaps a sign that he himself had pneumatic experiences.

III. Prophets in the Intertestamental Period

After the death of Herod, there were several serious set backs for charismatics in Israel. Pharisaic Rabbinism set to work creating a Palestinian patriarchate which led to the fixation of the Old Testament Canon. All movements which did not conform to the Pharisaic Rabbinic norm were eliminated. Even with this suppression, the charismatic element continued in Zealotism. Hence the revolt under the leadership of Akiba as Prophet. It was left to a Roman policy of extermination up to the edict of Toleration in 138 A.D. to end the spirit-affected manifestations.

Josephus tells us that several leaders in the Zealot movement during this time took on the title prophet. Among them was John Hyrcanus who is said to have had "the gift of prophecy" (War I. ii. 8). He also states that such Messianic pretenders as Theudas (Antq. XX. v. 1) and "the Egyptian" (Antiq. XX. viii. 6) claimed they were prophets.

During the Intertestamental period the role of the

prophet was taken over by the scribe. Jeremias finds several similiarities between the two:

Like the prophets, the scribes are servants of God along with the clergy; like the prophets they gather round themselves pupils to whom they pass on their doctrine; like the prophets, they are authorized in their office, not by proving their origin as the priests were, but solely by their knowledge of the Divine will which they announce by their teaching, their judgments and their preaching.¹⁵

Prophecy was not a novelty in the world in which the Christian Church came into being. "At the same time we should remember that it embraced the greatest range of meaning, from priest and interpreter to mouthpiece of the ecstatic, unintelligible oracle, to the fortuneteller and predictor."¹⁶

CHAPTER FIVE

SURVEY OF NEW TESTAMENT USAGE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the usage of "prophet" and related words in the New Testament. This survey is to provide background for the discussions in the following chapters.

I. ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ

The noun ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗΣ is found 144 times in the New Testament. The word is found thirty-seven times in Matthew; Luke uses it twenty-nine times in the Gospel and thirty times in Acts; Mark has it six times while the Gospel of John uses it fourteen; it occurs fourteen times in Paul's writings; Revelation has it eight times; Hebrews and II Peter use it twice; and James and I Peter have it once.

The prophet is one who proclaims and expounds divine revelation. In most cases it refers to Old Testament prophets, but is also applied to John the Baptist, Jesus, and others who proclaim the Kingdom of God. It is also applied to the believer who possesses the gift of prophecy. Only in one place (Titus 1:12) does a pagan receive the title of prophet, if the reference to Balaam in II Peter 2:16 is disregarded.

In Titus 1:12, Epimenides was reputed to have knowledge of divine things and was able to predict future events.

For the New Testament the prophet is the organ or spokesman of the Holy Spirit in declaring to men what he has received by inspiration. Prophets are given a special revelation which they transmit. The main purpose of the New Testament prophets is to give knowledge of the Christ who had appeared.

Scriptural sources?

In the

II. ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑ

The abstract noun ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑ is found nineteen times in the New Testament. Nine times are in Paul which include five times in I Corinthians and twice in I Timothy. Revelation has it seven times, II Peter twice and Matthew once.

ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑ refers to the prophetic word of the Old Testament (for example Matt. 13:14). This is the term Paul uses for the gift of prophecy. In Revelation 19:10 it probably means prophetic word, while at Revelation 11:6 it signifies prophetic activity.

III. ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΥΩ

The verb ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΥΩ is found twenty-eight times in The New Testament, eleven of which occur in Paul's letter to the I Corinthians (the only letter in which Paul uses the word). Also, Matthew has it four times; Mark and Luke each use it twice; Acts has it four times; it occurs once in John, I Peter and Jude; Revelation has it twice.

ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΥΩ has several meanings:

1. Prophets proclaim the revelation, the message of God, imparted to the prophet. Since the revelation can take on various forms, there are more detailed meanings.

Scriptural sources?

2. Prophets foretell the future. Just as the New Testament writers view the Old Testament as knowing the future in advance (Mark 7:6; Matt. 15:7; 11:13; I Peter 1:10; Jude 14), so do Zechariah (Luke 1:67) and the High Priest Caiaphas (John 11:51). It should be noted that Paul never uses the verb in this manner.

3. Prophets bring to light by prophetic speech something concealed. This is especially true for what is outside the realm of natural knowledge (Mark 14:65; Matt. 26:68; Luke 22:64).

4. In Paul the word takes on an ethical or hortatory character. In this sense it denotes teaching, comforting, and admonishing (I Cor. 14:3,31). This definition includes a conviction of sin and a call to repentance and faith (I Cor. 14:24f.).

5. There is a relationship between prophecy and λαλεῖν γλώσσῃ, especially evident in Acts 19:6. One possible explanation is that it indicates an inspired, ecstatic magnifying of God (cf. Acts 10:46).

6. In Acts 21:9 the four daughters of Philip are called παρθένοι προφητεύουσαι. Because of the hesitation to designate them προφῆτις this circumlocution is used meaning "to have the gift of prophecy."

7. A special case might also be made for Matthew 7:22.

Προφητεύω here might merely signify "to act as a prophet," but probably means "to proclaim the revelation of God as a prophet."

IV. Ψευδοπροφήτης

The noun ψευδοπροφήτης is found eleven times in the New Testament. Included are three times in both Matthew and Revelation, once in Mark, Luke, Acts, II Peter, and I John. The word is not found at all in the writings of St. Paul.

The word "falseprophet" is used of a person who makes a false claim to be a prophet (Matt. 7:15). The name is also applied to people who preach what is not true (I John 4:1) and thus show themselves to be falseprophets.

V. Related Words

The adjective προφητικός occurs only in Rom 16:26 and II Peter 1:19. Both times it refers to the Old Testament prophets.

In the New Testament the title προφήτης is not used with two exceptions. In Luke 2:36 Anna is given the title because she proclaimed Christ. Jezebel gives herself this title in Revelation 2:20 as a type of one led astray into idolatry.

The verb μαντεύομαι is found only at Acts 16:16 of the soothsaying of the girl at Philippi who prior to her exorcism by Paul brought her owners great gain.

CHAPTER SIX

PRE-CHRISTIAN PROPHETS

In the description of the events preceding the birth of Christ in Luke, Jewish men and women are directly and indirectly called prophets. For the purposes of this study, those men and women who Luke portrays as prophets leading up to Christ will be designated by the term "pre-Christian prophets."

I. Zechariah

The first such example is Zechariah who: ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ ἐπροφήτευσεν (Luke 1:67). The words that follow, the Benedictus, is a prophecy inspired by the Holy Spirit. The insight which Zechariah receives is the knowledge of the saving will of God which, even then, was being put into effect.

II. Elizabeth

Although the word προφητεύω is not used at the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth, we are told that Elizabeth ἐπλήσθη πνεύματος ἁγίου and she "exclaimed with a loud cry." This is very reminiscent of the previous in-

cident with Zechariah and likely expresses the fact that Elizabeth too spoke prophetically. Having received the prophetic Spirit, Elizabeth knew that Mary was the mother of the Messiah without being told.

III. Simeon

Again with Simeon the word group προφητεύω is not specifically used, but we have the corresponding formula: πνεῦμα ἦν ἄγιον ἐπ' αὐτόν (Luke 2:25). It was the Spirit who informed Simeon that he would not see death before he had seen the Messiah (2:26). He went ἐν τῷ πνεύματι into the temple where he saw the infant Jesus and spoke prophetically. Luke clearly depicts Simeon as a prophet.

IV. Anna

In contrast to Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Simeon, Luke expressly calls Anna a προφήτις, prophetess (Luke 2:36). Little is said about her work, but the statements that are said about her are significant. She stationed herself in the temple "with fasting and prayer night and day" (2:37). She recognized that the child Jesus was the Messiah and confirmed that statements of Simeon. Anna's response as a prophetess to Jesus is to proclaim him as the eschatological Savior.

It is significant to note that these "pre-Christian prophets" had a close affinity with the temple. Zechariah was a priest; Elizabeth was the wife of a priest; Simeon

saw the child Jesus in the temple; Anna is said to "have not departed from the temple."

V. John the Baptist

The New Testament account leaves little doubt that John the Baptist was a prophet. A variety of people see John as a prophet. According to Mark 11:32 and parallel accounts in Matthew 21:26 and Luke 20:6 it is the general view of the people. The investigation committee of the Sanhedrin pose the question to John himself in John 1:21. In Luke 1:76 Zechariah, his father, calls John a προφήτης ὑψίστου and in Matthew 11:9 and paralleled in Luke 7:26 Jesus says that he is indeed more than a prophet.

These direct statements of the New Testament regarding the prophetic office of John are reinforced by the similarities between the ministry of John and the Old Testament prophets. For example, the call of Jeremiah in the LXX is introduced by the saying: τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦ δεοῦ ὃ ἐγένετο ἐπὶ Ἰερεμῶν τὸν τοῦ χελκίου. In Luke 3:1 the ministry of John is introduced by the formula ἐγένετο ῥῆμα δεοῦ ἐπὶ Ἰωάνην τὸν Ζαχαρίου υἱόν. The brief account of Mark regarding John describes him as clothed in camel's hair with a leather girdle. This description makes it clear that John was a man of the desert, and Moses, a type of the Messiah, comes from the desert. Moses is called a prophet in Deuteronomy 34:10.

Two passages in particular deserve attention with re-

gard to the prophetic office of John the Baptist. The first is John 1:21 where John emphatically denies (Greek οὐ) that he is "the prophet." The words of Leon Morris in his commentary on the Gospel According to St. John is helpful at this point:

John's denial provoked a third question, "Art thou the prophet?" The Jews expected all sorts of prophets to appear before the coming of the Messiah (cf. Matt. 16:14; Mark 6:15; Luke 9:19). More particularly they thought of the prophet spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:15ff. But John was not that prophet either, he briefly answered "NO". It is not without its interest that from the days of the very earliest Christian preaching it was held that "the prophet" was identical with the Christ (see Acts 2:32). But the Jews distinguished between the two as we see from this passage and from 7:40f. The increasing curttness of John's successive utterances should not be missed. It appears to stem from a dislike for answering questions about himself. He had come to bear witness to Another.

The second passage which deserves close examination is found in Matthew 11:9-13 where Jesus describes John as "more than a prophet." This text contains an exegetically difficult expression ἕως Ἰωάννου ἐπρόφητεύσαν. The best approach to ascertaining the meaning of this expression is to first delineate what it cannot mean. The expression cannot be understood in strictly a temporal sense, for the prophets and the Law did not cease to prophesy with the coming of John, but 430 years earlier with Malachai. Nor can ἕως mean "up to" John, for their task remained even after John. The suggestion has been made that the word could mean "to discharge the prophetic office," but this is not a common usage of the word.¹⁸ This expression

does not contain a temporal limitation, but should be understood as meaning: "All the prophets and the law prophesied with reference to John." We agree with C. H. Lenski's interpretation:

For 430 years, since the last prophet, Malachai, spoke and wrote, the completed Old Testament Scriptures ('all the prophets of the Law') gave forth their utterance. 'Until John' does not mean that they then ceased, but that fulfillment came in John. Then 'the days of John the Baptist,' etc., set in when the kingdom pressed forward as it had never done before.¹⁹

Both of these passages demonstrate the prophecy of John the Baptist. The function of his prophecy was to usher in the new age, to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The content was to point men to "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

CHAPTER SEVEN

JESUS AS PROPHET

I. New Testament Scholarship

([?] Liberal) New Testament scholarship has given a considerable debate over many of the titles which the New Testament ascribes to Jesus. Only in the case of the title "prophet" has there been a general agreement that Jesus really acknowledged the title. The title of prophet has been described as the irreducible minimum which scholars could ascribe to Jesus.

The title, prophet, has in a sense served as a least common denominator for studies in Christology. All could start with the assumption that Jesus was 'at least' a prophet. Beyond that the battle waxed warm over whether or not he was 'more than a prophet.'²⁰

Even in view of this general agreement, the title "prophet" is not applied to Jesus as directly as one might think. There appears a degree of hesitation on the part of the Biblical authors to ascribe this title to Jesus directly and without reservation. Briefly, the New Testament evidence for Jesus as prophet is summarized below.

II. Biblical Evidence

The Gospel of Mark has Jesus using the term of himself only once, in 6:4. Since this is a proverb-like expression, some consider the reference to the prophet as only belonging

to the proverb itself. In Mark 13:22 there is a combination of "false Christ and false prophets" that is a possible self-designation. Three times followers outside of Jesus' inner group refer to him as prophet: Mark 6:15; 8:28; and 14:65.

Of those instances in Matthew which are not paralleled in Mark, a shadow has been cast over the clear statement of Jesus in 10:40-41 by scholars who see in it a special source or possibly an editorial change. However, there is no textual evidence for this doubt. The remaining two instances are the recording of the attitude of the multitude in 21:11 and 46.

In Luke-Acts there are a few more references to Jesus as prophet. Jesus designates himself as such in Luke 13:33, "for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." The terms here are very general. Luke includes confessions of others that Jesus was a prophet; the disciple on the Emmaus Road (Luke 24:19), the crowd who witnessed the raising of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:16), and the unbelieving Pharisee (Luke 7:39). The last reference is made more interesting by the B text in which he calls Jesus "the prophet." In Acts, Luke has Peter (3:22) and Stephen (7:37) showing that Jesus was a prophet like Moses with reference to Deuteronomy 18:15.

In John's Gospel we find the theme that Jesus is "the prophet" for whom men looked on the basis of Deuteronomy 18:15. Note the use of the definite article, "the prophet,"

in 1:21; 6:14; and 7:40. This construction is not found in the Synoptics. In addition, the Fourth Gospel repeats the saying about a prophet not without honor, 4:44. Twice outsiders call Jesus prophet on the basis of signs, 6:14 and 9:17. In 7:59b we have the saying, "search and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Paul's letter contain no reference to Jesus as Prophet. The closest Paul comes is in Ephesians 2:20, "Being built upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone." This verse may be construed as making a distinction between two groups, the apostles and prophets on the one hand, and Christ Jesus on the other. Thus, Paul is silent on the topic of Jesus as prophet, preferring, for the most part, Messianic titles of His exaltation.

There are additional reasons for regarding Jesus as a prophet to those described above. At his baptism he received a call from God and God's Spirit, reminiscent of the call of the Old Testament prophet. The initial vision was also a characteristic part of the Old Testament prophet's call. Further, Jesus used the language of the prophet Isaiah (61:1ff.) to describe his work: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." (Luke 4:18). Like the prophets who rarely attributed their power and authority to the Holy Spirit, but rather directly to Yahweh, Jesus' authority was directly from the Father. In addition, the miracles and healings were reminiscent of the prophetic ministries of Elijah and Elisha. Jesus knew future events, especially in the passion narrative. Especially in

Matthew is Jesus depicted with obvious parallels to Moses. He is the second Moses. One function of the prophet is to transmit the Divine message to a human audience. Jesus did this most ably as his teaching was characterized by "power" (ἐξουσία).

III. Conclusion

There were elements in the Messianic expectations in Jesus' day which would create false notions of the Messianic prophet. There is a possibility that the cause of the hesitation on the part of Jesus to call himself "prophet" was, in part, to prevent a false idea of who he was. This is in keeping with his guarded use of Messianic titles. Frederick suggests that "Paul does not call Jesus a prophet on polemical grounds, since the term was used by Jewish Christians who adhered to the Law and for whom Jesus was a second Moses."²¹

Finally, Jesus was more than an ordinary prophet. Not only did he speak "in behalf of" Yahweh, he was God himself incarnate.

The persistent impression of something coming to fulfillment, of a Kingdom already coming to realization would point to one who was more than a conventional prophet. Not only was Jesus saying that in his works the Kingdom had come upon them, but he was declaring that in such aspects of that Kingdom as were future, in the Parousia, he himself would be centrally important. No ordinary prophet would carry out such a double role!²⁰

CHAPTER EIGHT

PROPHETS AND PROPHECY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

I. The Nature of Christian Prophecy

The first topic under this heading is the nature of Christian prophecy. By way of definition, Christian prophecy is the inspired speech of special preachers, called by God, through whom God's plan of salvation of the world and His will for the individual believer is made known.

From this definition the nature of prophecy can be further divided into these points:

1. God's plan of salvation The prophet knows divine mysteries in I Corinthians 13:1. The prophet in Ephesians 3:5f. knows of God's saving will for the Gentiles. One of the chief concerns of prophecy is to declare the imminence of the parousia.

2. Future events Agabus predicted the great famine which was to come on the world in Acts 11:28. Paul predicted the fate that awaited him in Jerusalem in Acts 21:10f.

3. What God would have men to do. Paul and Barnabus are separated for missionary work by prophecy in Acts 13:1. Timothy enters the ministry by prophecy in I Timothy 1:18 and 4:14.

4. Exhortation The prophet admonishes the idle, consoles the wary, encourages those under assault in I Corinthians 13:3 and Acts 15:32. He brings to light the secret wickedness of men in I Corinthians 14:25.

II. A Comparison with Old Testament Prophets

It is significant to note the view of the New Testament writers for the Old Testament prophets. For the New Testament, the Old Testament prophets were the mouthpieces of God. This high regard for Old Testament prophecy is demonstrated in the formula: ἔλάλησεν ὁ θεὸς διὰ στόματος τῶν ἁγίων ἀπ' ἰούκων αὐτοῦ προφητῶν (Acts 3:21; cf. Luke 1:70). "The prophet is not the true speaker. but God, who uses the prophet when he addresses the people."²³ Other expressions such as διὰ τοῦ προφήτου denote that God Himself speaks through the prophet. The word of the prophet is God's own word.

There are similarities between New Testament prophecy and Old Testament prophecy, not the least of which is that they have the same name. In Acts 2:17 the prophesying of the apostles is the fulfillment of the prophecy promised for the last time by the prophet Joel. Other similarities include the use of symbolical action by Agabus which is reminiscent of the prophets Ezediel and Hosea. He also introduces his prophecy much in the same style as the Old Testament prophets (with the Holy Spirit in the place of Yahweh). The apocalyptic style of John's Revelation is very similiar to the Hebrew thought of the Old Testament, including sections

of Daniel and Ezekiel which use the apocalyptic literary genre.

There are also differences between Old Testament prophecy and the prophecy found in the New Testament. Whereas in the Old Testament only a few select individuals were set apart to be prophets, in the New Testament ^{many} all are filled with the prophetic spirit (Acts 2:16). In Corinth there must have been a large number of prophets which necessitated Paul to limit those who spoke at one time to two or three (I Cor. 14:29). Unlike the Old Testament prophet, the New Testament prophet does not stand above the community; he is a member of it.

The gift of prophecy is preferred over all other gifts of grace (I Cor. 14:1). It is significant to note that prophets are mentioned directly after apostles in I Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 2:20; 3:5; 4:11; Revelation 18:20. Evangelists, pastors and teachers are put behind the prophet in Ephesians 4:11, Acts 13:1, Revelation 12:6 and I Corinthians 12:28. According to Ephesians 2:20 the prophets along with the apostles are the foundation of the Church. In his Commentary on Ephesians, J. Armitage Robinson correctly points out that the prophets mentioned here are not the Old Testament prophets, but the New. He writes:

ΠΡΟΦΗΤΩΝ that is, prophets of the Christian Church. There can be no doubt that this is the Apostle's meaning. Not only does the order 'apostles and prophets' point in this direction; but a few verses lower down (3:5) the phrase is repeated, and in 4:11 we have ΤΟΥΣ ΝΕΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥΣ
ΤΟΥΣ ΔΕ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΑΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΤΑΣ
where the Old Testament prophets are obviously out of the question.²⁴

Also in Revelation 11:18, 16:6 and 18:24 prophets are distinguished from ordinary members of the congregation as a special group.

III. A Pneumatic Gift

St. Paul lists the gift of prophecy among the "Spiritual gifts." He uses two words to describe spiritual gifts, Πνευματικά and χαρίσματα. They are "Charisms or empowerments, given to the Church from God (I Cor. 12:28; II Tim. 1:6f.) or from the risen Lord (Eph. 4:7,11; cf. I Cor 2:16; 14:37)." ²⁵ Romans 1:11 makes it evident that Πνευματικά and χαρίσματα are not to be equated, Here the former qualifies the latter. That is, χαρίσματα can be used of all the spiritual gifts while Πνευματικά is restricted to gifts of speaking. In addition to Romans 1:11, I Corinthians 2:6-16 and chapter 14 demonstrate the functioning of a certain class of "charismatics," the "pneumatics." Such persons were empowered to speak τῷ Πνεύματι, whether in prophecy, teaching, speaking in tongues, or interpretation. Paul placed first in the church apostles, then prophets, and then teachers (I Cor 12:28).

There is both a broad and restricted sense in the terms προφήτης and προφητεία. In the broad sense all those exercising pneumatic gifts are prophets. In the more restricted sense it is distinguished from the other pneumatic gifts. Πνευματικός is the broader concept of which προφήτης is a special type. The pneumatics are not only those who sing and speak in strange tongues, but

also those who interpret them. In this way they exercise the prophetic gift and yet remain distinct from the prophets.

IV. Prophecy and the Charismata of Knowledge and Tongues

Among the charismata there is a relationship and a distinction between prophecy and γνῶσις in I Corinthians 13:8-12. Both are charismata, deal with mysteries, and are imperfect. The difference lies in the way they are used. γνῶσις is individualistic while prophecy, by its very nature, is concerned with proclaiming to others. Hence γνῶσις puffs up (I Cor. 8:1) but prophecy edifies (I Cor. 14:3).

There is also a relationship between prophecy and the charismata of glossalalia. It is not always possible to make a sharp distinction between prophecy and ecstatic experience. The relationship was already noted above in Old Testament prophecy. The evidence for ecstatic experience in New Testament prophecy depends almost exclusively on the narratives in Acts which speak of the believers being filled with the Holy Spirit: Acts 2:4,17, 4:31, 10:44ff., 11:15 and 19:6. There is also an ecstatic element to the prophecy of St. John in the book of Revelation (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). Yet, the New Testament does not use such words as μάντις, χρησμολόγος, μαίνωμα and ἐνθουσιασμός for Christian prophecy. These are almost always used for pagan soothsayers and false prophets.

Paul is concerned with differentiating between prophecy and glossalalia. Here we find both similarities and dissimilarities. Both have to do with μυστήρια. The

prophet declares the secret counsel of God. The man who speaks in tongues, however, speaks a mystery to his hearers because what he says is like a foreign language (I Cor.14:11,16). Both the man who speaks with tongues and the prophet have men who serve as assistants. The interpreter puts what is said into intelligible language. The examiner assesses what is said by the prophet. Another similarity is found in οἰκοδομή. The prophet edifies the whole community, whereas the man speaking in tongues edifies only himself (I Cor. 14:2).

Also in Acts is there a relationship between glossolalia and prophecy. They are both the result of the working of the Spirit. In Acts 2:17 the λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις of the disciples at Pentecost is called prophecy. Again in Acts 19:6 when Paul laid hands on and baptized the disciples of John they ελάλου τε γλώσσαις καὶ ἐπροφοῦν. The connection between glossolalia and prophecy is that both are instruments of the Holy Spirit. One is ecstatic speech, the other is in intelligible speech. One possible explanation for the equation of glossolalia and prophecy in Acts 2 is due to the fact that the various tongues are in fact understood by the respective hearers as their own language. In Acts 19:6, the tongues may have been "interpreted."

V. Prophecy and Exhortation

Although it only occurs in Luke-Acts, the epistles of Paul, and the Letter to the Hebrews, the word group παράκλησις

Παράκλησις is often found associated with prophets and prophecy. Luke uses the verb of John the Baptist as well as of the ministry of those in Acts designated as prophets: Barnabus (Acts 11:23), Paul and Silas (Acts 16:40) and Paul (Acts 20:1). It is noteworthy that the term is not used to describe the ministry of Jesus.

The word is associated by Luke with the activity of the Holy Spirit. The church walks in "the Παράκλησις of the Holy Spirit" Acts 9:31. The prophets Paul and Barnabus are invited to give a "word of Παράκλησις," i.e. an exposition of Scripture (Acts 13:15); the Jerusalem Decree, which is given through the Holy Spirit is termed a Παράκλησις in Acts 15:28, 31.

Παράκλησις is used both of the proclamation to lead men to saving faith, and also to those of long-standing in the faith. A λόγος Παράκλησις is requested of St. Paul in Acts 13:15 as he presents the message of salvation for the first time to those in Pisidian Antioch. The same expression is found in Hebrews 13:22 as "a word of exhortation" to Christians who were becoming weary.

In Acts 4:36 the name of Barnabus is interpreted as "Son of Παράκλησις" which may mean either consolation or exhortation. In a footnote, F. F. Bruce describes the Aramaic background of the name: "If the former is the sense here, Barnabus may represent Aramaic Bar-nawcha or Bar-newacha ("son of refreshment"); if the latter, it may represent Bar-nebiyya ("son of the prophet" or "son of prophecy").²⁶

Thus, while it is far from certain, it is possible that the Aramaic name of Barnabus was "the son of prophecy."

In the epistles of St. Paul, the use of παρὰ κλήσις in describing the specific ministry of the prophet is supported by I Corinthians 14:2f. There the prophet's ministry of οἰκοδομή is accomplished by means of παρὰ κλήσις and παρὰ μυσία which are, in the words of G. Stahlin, "a part of the work of prophesying."²⁷

Prophets are not the only ones to give παρὰ κλήσις. In Romans 15:4,5 Scripture and God give παρὰ κλήσις and in II Corinthians 5:20 God "exhorts" through Paul and Timothy. Παρὰ κλήσις is one way in which the Christian prophet exercises the ministry of his office. It is not the only way, nor is he the only one to give παρὰ κλήσις. In Romans 12:6,8 παρὰ κλήσις stands separate and distinct from προφητεία.

VI. A Comparison of Luke and Paul

There are rather striking differences between the authors Luke and Paul in the manner in which they approach Christian prophecy. On this account, we will consider them individually, beginning with Luke.

For Luke, prophecy is a direct result of the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the explanation given for Pentecost. The Spirit is the power behind both tongues and prophecy (Acts 19:6).

Whether the Christian prophets wrought in ecstasy or by enlightened exhortation, Luke was certain that they spoke by inspiration, that is, by the

invasion of the Spirit, and in this Spirit all the Christian community was expected to participate.²⁸

The whole community was inspired by the Spirit, but not all considered themselves prophets. Luke restricts the term or title προφήτας to a select number of leading men who exercise considerable influence in the Christian community. Among those who Luke specifically calls prophets are the group from Jerusalem visiting Antioch including Agabus (Acts 11:27), a group residing in Antioch which includes Barnabus and Paul (Acts 13:1), and two prophets who accompany the Jerusalem Decree to Antioch, Judas Barsabbas and Silas (Acts 15:22,32).

The aspect of prophecy which is found in Luke but not in Paul is the prediction of future events. For Luke the prophets are foretellers as well as forthtellers. Chief among the prophets who predict the future is the prophet Agabus. The same name is used to describe a prophet in Acts 11:28 and 21:10 and is usually considered to be the same man.

The predictions of Agabus are very instructive as to the nature of foretelling prophecy and is worthy of a closer investigation. At the first meeting of Agabus, Luke writes: "And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world; and this took place in the days of Claudius" (11:28). Agabus is not described as a μάντις, seer, nor does he function as one. His prediction does not deal with the

satisfaction of human curiosity, but with facilitating the Church's response to provide for those in need because of the famine.

The second incident took place seven years later in Caesarea.

While we were staying for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us he took Paul's girdle and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this girdle and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles'" (21:10,11).

Again, this is not the work of a seer. The purpose of the prophecy was to demonstrate that the Spirit was at work in guiding the Church, even in the imprisonment of Paul. This fits into Luke's purpose, to demonstrate how the Church spread from Jerusalem to Rome.

E. Ellis makes the following summary of prophecy in Acts:

In summary, Christian prophecy in Acts is represented as an eschatological power of the Holy Spirit from God (Acts 2:17) or from the risen Jesus (Acts 1:8; 2:17,22). Although prophecy is a possibility for any Christian, it is primarily identified with certain leaders who exercise it as a ministry.²⁹

It is important to note that the prophet and prophecy is different in the writings of Paul. Rather than being characterized by visions which transport him out of the world, the chief mark of the prophet for Paul is the Word which God has given him to proclaim. The prophet is very much in control of his prophesying. He can speak or can refrain from doing so while another speaks (I Cor. 14:29ff.). There are

at least three elements of prophecy in Paul. First, it is the intelligible preaching that builds up the church in faith (Rom. 12:6). It also explains mysteries, those things which are hidden to men but have been revealed by God. As a result, prophecy imparts knowledge, or γνῶσις (cf. I Cor. 13:2).

Central to Paul's discussion of the gift of prophecy is the exhortation given in Romans 12:6; "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them; If prophecy, in proportion (ἀνάλογη) to our faith." The word πίστεως here is a synonym of εὐαγγέλιον, the Gospel in its broad meaning. All prophecy must be related in such a way that faith can result, i.e. Law and Gospel. Πίστις is understood to be the whole body of revelation.

Paul is here guarding against the temptation to misuse prophecy by going beyond what God has revealed and thus subverting the purpose of His saving will. Martin Franzmann noted that:

This gift, the eminent ability given to some, to 'prove what is the will of God' for the Church here and now and to declare that will, brings with it its own temptation. It is the temptation to go beyond what God has given us and to muddy the waters of the Spirit with 'meditations' of one's own.³⁰

Approaching the subject from a different perspective, for Paul the purpose of all prophecy is to lead men to faith. Therefore, prophecy is ἐκ μέρας, imperfect, and will pass away. In the age to come there will be no

need for prophecy, for Christian will see Christ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΝ
ΠΡΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΟΝ, face to face (I Cor. 13:8,12). The
 work of the true prophet is plain. He brings οὐκ ὁδομαγία
παράκλησις and παρρησία. He brings a conviction
 of sin and directs men to faith and the resulting worship
 of the true God (I Cor. 14:25).

VII. The Prophet and Other Offices

In the listing of spiritual gifts, the prophet is listed along with several other offices. The next topic is to determine the relationship between prophet and apostle, teacher, elder, and evangelist. The problem is that there is a great deal of overlapping in the designation of ministries. On the one hand to be "full of the Spirit" implies the empowerment of a variety of gifts (Acts 2:33; 6:3,8). On the other hand certain persons may be set apart in the church on the basis of a specific gift that is recognized.

In order to come to an understanding of the relationship between prophet and apostle, Paul and Peter serve as illustrations. While Paul never calls himself a prophet but always an apostle, he spoke prophetically to the Church (I Cor. 14:6). He proclaimed God's will of salvation for both Jew and Gentile (Rom. 11:25,26). In I Corinthians 15:51ff. (and elsewhere) he speaks of the imminent parousia. In Acts he predicted the events that awaited him (20:11,19; 17:22). In addition, his epistles are exhortations, admonitions, and promises. Thus we can say that while Paul did not call himself a prophet, he possessed the gift of prophecy.

While not called a prophet, Peter has the marks of a prophet. For example, he has the knowledge of men's hearts (Acts 5:3; 8:21ff.). His sermon at Pentecost is a part of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (Acts 2:17). He has visions in Acts 10:10. Peter, like Paul, though not called a prophet, does the work of a prophet.

Peter and Paul, as illustrations, show that all the activities of the prophet, including prediction, exhortation and biblical exposition, can be ascribed to the apostle. E. K. Simpson describes the relationship between the prophet and apostle in this manner:

The apostolate was an inner circle of privy councillors or plenipotentiaries entrusted with the task of foundation-laying, and the New Testament prophets and evangelists might be entitled their aides-de-camp, auxiliaries inferior in status or catholicity of embassy and amenable to their endorsement and location.³¹

In addition to their function as prophets, the apostles do "many wonders and signs" (Acts 2:43), they are witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:22; 13:31), and they exercise special authority in the congregations (Acts 8:15). It would not be incorrect to diagram the relationship with two concentric circles, the circle representing the prophet's activity is smaller.

Against this view some have argued that apostles were "'prophets on circuit' in contrast to 'prophets in session'." ³² That is, an apostle is simply a prophet who is sent as a missionary. This accounts for why Paul and Barnabus were called prophets while at Antioch (Acts 13:1)

and in other places apostle (e.g. Acts 14:4). This does not, however, account for the times elsewhere in Acts when the apostles are stationary in Jerusalem and prophets are sent out.

The titles of prophet and didáskalos, teacher, are often found in close proximity in the New Testament. In Acts 13:1 (the only place didáskalos is found in Acts) we have a list of men in the church at Antioch called "prophets and teachers." In I Corinthians 12:28 the teachers follow after apostles and prophets in a list of specific functions in the community. In Ephesians 4:11 the teacher is fourth after apostle, prophet, and evangelist.

The relationship between prophets and teachers is very close. Both are significant preachers of the Word in the church. The emphasis of didáskalos is on instruction whereas the emphasis of prophecy is on applying an appropriate Word from God to a specific situation.

From these lists it is obvious that prophet and teacher are not identical, but it is not as obvious as to what the difference might be.

Ellis suggests that prophecy embraces certain kinds of inspired teaching. The difference between the prophet and teacher then, is the manner in which the teaching is given, or teaching by those who are recognized as prophets. "The teaching of the prophet appears to overlap that of the teacher and can be distinguished from it only by the manner in which it is given or by the recognized status as 'prophet'

of the one who is teaching."³³

One suggestion is that the prophets are "pneumatics" (I Cor 14:29) and that the teachers were "non-pneumatics" whose gift was their own clear understanding.³⁴

Chrysostom distinguished prophets from teachers by this: "He who prophesies utters everything from the spirit, while he who teaches sometimes discourses from his own understanding."³⁵

The distinction between teacher and prophet is most clearly found in Ephesians 4. The key to understanding is the common article in verse 11 that identifies διδάσκαλος with ποιμὲνες. This construction would make the διδάσκαλος identical with the ποιμὲνες. The πολιτὴν is responsible for the life of the local congregations, and, in the widest sense, the διδάσκαλος is part of his office. The order of the offices in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 suggest a material order. This implies that the activity of the teacher was needed only when the foundation had been laid by the apostles and prophets. Note that in Ephesians 4:11 the missionary activity of the apostle is expanded by the evangelist who also precedes the work of the pastor/teacher.

The term πρεσβύτεροι, elder, is used to describe a leadership group within local congregations in the New Testament. Their function is "to shepherd" (ποιμαίνειν) the Church (Acts 20:28), the cognate of which is listed among the spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4:11. In Acts 20:28 the elders are given their task by the Holy Spirit, even though

they are appointed by an Apostle (Acts 14:23).

In Acts 15 (and other places) it is clear that the elders were recipients of inspiration by the Holy Spirit and, on the basis of that inspiration, made doctrinal decisions for the Church. The office of elder, like the prophet, involved a ministry of teaching (I Tim. 5:17; III John 1). Elders were also involved in a healing ministry in James 5:14. Again, a part of the ministry of the elder overlaps the ministry of the prophet. The additional element for the elder is the recognized authority in the organizational structure within the local congregation.

Like apostle, teacher and elder there is a close relationship between prophet and evangelist. Both prophet and evangelist are involved with proclamation. The distinction involves the hearers to whom the proclamation is addressed. Usually the hearers involved with evangelism are those who have yet to come to faith in Jesus. Prophecy is usually directed to believers. However, this is not a sharp distinction for both prophecy and evangelism are directed to both believers and non-believers. A similar distinction can be made with the content of each. Evangelism proclaims God's grace in Jesus Christ while prophecy speaks of God's will for the world and for believers. Again, this distinction does not always hold.

In conclusion, prophecy is one among several means by which Jesus leads His Church. The prophet is one who makes known the meaning of the Scriptures, exhorts and strengthens the congregation. He is one among several

workers who manifest the character of the Lord who is the Prophet of the endtime.

VIII. The Christian Prophet and Revelation

As we have stated above, central to the activity of the prophets in the New Testament was the exposition of Scripture and the proclamation of the Gospel. The question posed by New Testament scholarship is, How much of the material in the New Testament can be attributed to Christian prophets? The view is widely held that many of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospel accounts are the creation of Christian prophets. While it is not within the scope of this study to speak to this subject at great length, several points need to be made.

The authority upon whom modern scholars base their conclusions regarding the creative role of the prophets is found in the form-critical analyses of Rudolf Bultmann.³⁶ His position was that Christian tradition took over certain Jewish materials, reworked them to fit their concerns and put them on the lips of Jesus.

The Church drew no distinction between such utterances by Christian prophets and the sayings of Jesus in the tradition for the reason that even the dominical sayings in the tradition were not the pronouncements of a past authority, but the sayings of the risen Lord who is always a contemporary for the Church.³⁷

In a footnote, Bultmann makes this further comment: "One can suppose that not a few sayings, which have come down to us in the New Testament as utterances of Jesus, were originally spoken by such inspired men in the name of Christ."³⁸

In his article entitled, "How may we identify Oracles of Christian Prophets in the Synoptic Tradition? Mark 3:28-29 as a Test Case," M. E. Boring makes the following conclusion:

If it be granted that earliest Christianity was a pre-ordained-charged community in which prophets arose to proclaim the world of the risen Lord, and that it initially drew no sharp distinction between Jesus of Nazareth represented by his traditional words and the exalted Lord represented by new revelations through Christian prophets, then the inclusion of both kinds of sayings (as well as others) in the synoptic tradition is a natural consequence. It is this, a priori logic, rather than specific evidence which has led to most of the identification of prophetic material in the synoptic tradition.³⁹

This statement by Boring sums up the evidence for the "creative" role of the Christian prophets. Form criticism has based its conclusions on the a priori assumption that the sayings of Jesus in the Gospels were created ex nihilo by the early church. Having arrived at this conclusion, they then attribute this activity to Christian prophets. For those operating with hermeneutical principles that will not allow such a priori conclusions to be forced on the text, this view cannot stand.

At the same time the question which must be answered is, What role did the Christian prophets play in the formation of the canon? Of those to whom the New Testament specifically gives the title προφήτης, only two are named in connection with the writing of a book which is a part of the canon, Paul and Silas.

Certainly the role of Silas was limited. He is called a prophet in Acts 15:32 and most assume that he is the

Silvanus mentioned in Paul's letters. In both epistles to the Thessalonians, he is named along with Paul and Timothy in the salutation. Paul is specifically named as the author in II Thessalonians 3:17 and it is generally assumed that he is the author of both. The name Silvanus appears again as the amaensis in I Peter 5:12. It is not known for sure that this is the Silas of Acts, nor what part he played in the writing of the letter. Silas has also been suggested as a candidate for the authorship of the Letter to the Hebrews, but there is no real evidence. Finally, with regard to Silas, it should be pointed out that some see Silas as an apostle on the basis of II Thessalonians 2:17. However, the argument against this exegesis is to be preferred.

Paul, on the other hand, wrote more than any other New Testament author. It was not Paul, the apostle, who Luke calls a προφήτης in Acts 13:1, but Saul, before he had received the commission to become an apostle. Further, it is most significant that Paul never claimed the authority to address a congregation because he was a προφήτης, but always because he was an ἀποστόλος. While Paul did not diminish the importance of the Christian prophet (with the apostles they are the foundation of the Church in Ephesians 2:20), he used his standing as an apostle to address all his letters except Philippians, I and II Thessalonians and Philemon in the salutation. Central to Paul's claim to apostleship is that he was an eye-witness of the resurrected Christ and had received a personal commission from Him (I Cor.

9:1-3).

The book of Revelation calls itself "a prophecy" (Rev. 11:10). The author is caught up in a vision like the Old Testament prophets. He received his words directly from the Exalted Christ. Yet John, usually considered to be "the disciple whom Christ loved," is not called a prophet. Of all John's writings, Revelation is the only one bearing his name. Even though John's use of apocalyptic language and style overshadows his apostleship, it does not rule it out as his authority for writing.

In summary, none of the New Testament writers claim their authority for writing solely on the basis of their status as a προφήτης or solely because they had the charism of prophecy. Yet it is obvious that they indeed had the gift of prophecy. No sharp distinction can be drawn between the prophet and the apostle, except that the activity of the latter was more inclusive which included the special inspiration to pen the Scriptures.

IX. False Prophets

Prophetic utterances presuppose that a pneumatic person may give voice to two kinds of spirits, evil and good. The gift of διάκρισις, discernment (I Cor. 12:10), the reference of Paul to "test all things" in I Thesalonians 5:21, and the command to disregard any prophecy through a spirit that the day of the Lord has come in II Thessalonians 2:2 support this statement.

Ellis notes that among the pneumatics were those who were in fact opponents of Paul and the Gospel:

Moreover, he (Paul) teaches that both the Holy Spirit and 'the spirit of the world' (I Cor. 2:6,12) are manifested especially among pneumatics, the inspired speakers of the Church. For such persons include not only Paul's co-workers but also his opponents, who appear in II Corinthians as pseudoapostle, bearers of a different spirit, who boast of their spiritual gifts--visions and revelations.⁴⁰

False prophets emerge as opponents of Christ's true apostles and prophets (Matt. 7:15; Mark 13:22; Acts 13:6). They have a different spirit, marked by a proclamation of a different Jesus and a different Gospel (II Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:6). They convey a teaching of demons (I Tim. 4:1) characterized by greed (Phil 3:19; Rom 16:18), by sexual licentiousness (II Tim. 3:6; Jude 7,8; Rev. 2:20) and by a disparagement of Jesus (I Cor. 12:3; II Pet. 2:1-3; I John 4:1-3).

There are two criteria given to judge true from false prophets, teaching and fruits. The criterion of teaching involves the right confession of Jesus Christ. "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come into the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God" (I John 4:2). B. F. Wescott in his notes on this text states:

The construction with the participle (ἐληλυθόσα) gives a different thought from that with the infinitive (ἐληλυθεναί). It does not express the acknowledgment of the truth of the fact but the acknowledgment of One in whom this fact is fulfilled and of whom it is predicated.⁴¹

The test of true prophecy is its teaching of Jesus Christ, that is, the Gospel in both its broad and narrow meanings.

False prophets too claim to prophesy in the name of Jesus (Matt. 7:22). In addition to confession, the conduct of the prophet must be examined. Augustine commented on I John 4:2: "ipse est spiritus Dei qui dicit Jesum in carne venisse: qui non dicit lingua sed factis; qui dicit non sonando sed amondo."⁴¹

Miracles cannot serve as signs of accreditation; even false prophets use miracles as the very means of seduction (Mark 13:22; Matt. 24:24; Rev. 13:13; 16:13; 19:20). The New Testament, like the Old, is very clear that not every prophet or prophecy should be followed. In I John 4:1,2 and I Thessalonians 5:21 the statement is made that all prophecy must be examined. One gift of the Spirit is the gift of discernment (I Cor. 12:10) which judges whether or not what is said comes from God. Prophets are to be judged by other prophets (I Cor. 14:29). False prophets are especially expected in the last days (Matt. 24:11).

The New Testament word for false prophet, ψευδο-προφήτης covers various kinds of false prophets which can be placed into two categories. The first are the Jewish prophets of the past with reference to Luke 6:26 and II Peter 2:1. The second category is made up of those who consider themselves a part of the church, yet are outside it. The Jewish magician Simon fits this category, but especially frequent are teachers who disturb the church by their false teachings.

Other designations for false prophets are ψευδοπροφηταί
(II Pet. 2:1), πλάνος (II John 7) and ἀντιπρόσωποι
(I John 2:18).

CHAPTER NINE

PROPHECY IN THE EARLY CHURCH

In the post-apostolic age prophecy exerted a potent influence in the Church. At Rome the "prophet" Hermas imparted his visions that taught a second repentance after baptism. His book, the Shepherd, was a book of prophecies. The Church at Smyrna described their leader, Polycarp, as "an apostolic and prophetic teacher and bishop of the catholic church."⁴³

Eusebius tells us that predictive prophecy was very much a part of the Church at Jerusalem just prior to 70 A.D.

Furthermore, the members of the Jerusalem Church, by means of an oracle given by special revelation to acceptable persons there, were ordered to leave the city before the war began and settle in a town in Peraea called Pella.⁴⁴

The Didache draws an interesting picture of the role of Christian prophets in the early church. Prophets were held in very high regard in the communities in which they settled or visited. Once their genuineness as a prophet had been established they were beyond criticism. They were the recipients of gifts from the congregations, Near the close of the book when bishops and deacons are mentioned, honor is claimed for them because: "They also minister unto

you the ministration of the prophets and teachers: therefore despise them not; for they are your honourable ones together with the prophets and teachers."⁴⁵ The Didache also dis-

cusses at some length the problem of false prophets who visit the Christian community. The Didache states: οὐ πᾶς δὲ ὁ λογῶν ἐν πνεύματι προφήτης ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἐὰν ἔχη τοὺς τρόπους κυρίου ἀπὸ οὗν τῶν τρόπων γινωσκθήσεται ὁ ψευδοπροφήτης καὶ ὁ προφήτης⁴⁶

Prophecy received a cruel blow with the Montanists who called themselves νέα προφητεία. They predicted that the parousia was at hand and would come down in the towns of Phrygia of Pepuza and Tymion where all Christians were to gather. When it did not take place, they were labeled as "false prophets" on the basis of the Old Testament criterion where prophecy must come to pass if it is to be regarded as true.

The character of prophecy changed with the completion and spread of the New Testament canon. Gradually the title faded and the function was taken over by the bishop and others who held the office of the ministry.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

Certainly it is difficult to formulate a brief yet concise definition of the spiritual gift of prophecy. The length of this study bears this statement out as true. Before proceeding to the present author's definition, two others are offered for comparison.

The first is by Leslie B. Flynn in his book 19 Gifts of the Spirit: "We might define prophecy as the Spirit-given ability to proclaim the written Word of God with clarity and to apply it to a particular situation with a view to correction or edification."⁴⁷

David Hoover and Roger W. Leenerts are somewhat clearer in their Bible-study entitled: Enlightened with His Gifts. They define the gift of prophecy as : "The special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to certain members of the Body of Christ (church) to interpret Scripture (revelation) correctly and to apply its message of Law and Gospel to the needs of man in a given situation in a public setting."⁴⁸

On the basis of what has been said previously in this study, the following definition is offered: The gift of prophecy is the special charism, given by the Holy Spirit to

select individuals within the Church, for the purpose of correctly expounding the Scriptures so that God's message of sin and grace as well as His will for the individual and the world is made known. The result of such prophecy is that the Holy Spirit effects repentance and faith in the heart of the believer who is edified, comforted and responds in worship of the True God.

Along with other New Testament titles such as apostle, reader, and evangelist, the title of prophet has fallen into disuse in the church of today. On the basis of the above definition, the task of the prophet to "speak in behalf" of God, and the overlapping of offices in the New Testament, the office of prophet is represented by the office of the public ministry. As in the New Testament where special men are set aside as prophets, there is the corresponding office of the ministry.

In the New Testament prophesying was not limited to those who held the office of prophet. Likewise, in the church today people teach and in many ways proclaim the Gospel and perform the task of the prophet.

As in the New Testament, all prophecy must be judged strictly on the basis of teaching and in the case of prophets, by his conduct. All attempts to go beyond what the Spirit has revealed in the Scriptures is to be labeled as false.

Finally, all prophecy points to Jesus Christ. He is our PROPHET, Priest, and King

FOOTNOTES

¹For example: David W. Hoover and Roger W. Leenerts, Enlighten with His Gifts, (St. Louis, Missouri: Lutheran Growth) 1979

²Gerhardt Kittel and Gerhardt Friedrich, gen. ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, 9 vols., (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing co., 1978) vol. VI: p. 783

³Ibid., p. 787

⁴Ibid., p. 790

⁵Ibid., p. 791

⁶Colin Brown, gen. ed., The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology, 3 vols., (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978) vol. 3: p. 76

⁷Kittel p. 797

⁸Colin Brown p. 77

⁹E. Earle Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic, (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1978) p. 28

¹⁰Ibid., p. 133

¹¹(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977) p. 103

¹²Kittel p. 817

¹³Ibid., p. 818

¹⁴Ibid., p. 821

¹⁵Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969) p. 242

¹⁶Paul E. Davies, "Jesus and the Role of the Prophet," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXIV (1945): p. 247

¹⁷Leon Morris, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Gospel According to John, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing co., 1977) p. 136

¹⁸Kittel p. 840

¹⁹R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House 1964) p. 438

²⁰Franklin W. Young, "Jesus the Prophet: A Re-examination," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXVIII (1949) p. 286

²¹Kittel p. 848

²²Davies p. 253

²³Kittel p. 831

²⁴J. Armitage Robinson, Commentary on Ephesians, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregal Publications, 1979) p. 163

²⁵Ellis p. 24

²⁶F. F. Bruce, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Book of Acts, (Grand Rapids Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publsihing Co., 1975) p. 109

²⁷Kittel vol. V, p. 82

²⁸Davies p. 248

²⁹Ellis p. 130

³⁰Martin H. Franzmann, Concordia Commentary, Romans, (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1968) p. 222

³¹E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co., 1976) p. 94

³²Ellis p. 141

³³Idem

³⁴Kittel vol II, p. 158

³⁵T. K. Abott, The International Critical Commentary, The Epistles of the Ephesians and Colosians, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark LTD., 1979) p. 117

³⁶ see The History of the Synoptic Tradition, (Oxford, 1968)

³⁷ Bultmann, as quoted in David Hill, "On the Evidence for the Creative Role of Christian Prophets, " New Testament Studies XX (1974) p. 260

³⁸ Ibid., p. 263

³⁹ Journal of Biblical Literature XCI (1972) p. 501-521

⁴⁰ Ellis p. 30

⁴¹ B. F. Wescott, The Epistles of St. John, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing House., 1976) p. 141

⁴² Idem

⁴³ Martyrdom of Polycarp 16.2 as quoted in: Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, 5 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1965) vol. 3: p. 920

⁴⁴ Eusebius, The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine, Translated by G. A. Williamson, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1975) p. 111

⁴⁵ As quoted in Robinson p. 98

⁴⁶ As quoted in Kittel vol. V. p. 860

⁴⁷ (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1980) p. 52-53

⁴⁸ p. 43

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- T. K. Abott, The International Critical Commentary, The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colosians. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark LTD., 1979
- William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, gen. ed., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957
- M. E. Boring, "How May We Identify Oracles of Christian Prophets in the Synoptic Tradition? Mark 3:28-29 as a Test Case." Journal of Biblical Literature XCI (1972): 501
- Colin Brown, gen. ed., The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. 3 vols. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978
- F. F. Bruce, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Book of Acts. Grand Rapids Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co., 1975
- Paul E. Davies, "Jesus and the Role of the Prophet." Journal of Biblical Literature LXIV (1945): 241
- E. Earle Ellis, Prophecy and Hermeneutic, Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1978
- , "Prophets" The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1965
- Eusebius, The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine. Translated by G. A. Williamson. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Publishing House, 1975
- Leslie B. Flynn, 19 Gifts of the Spirit. Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1980
- Martin H. Franzmann, Concordia commentary, Romans. St. Louis Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1968
- David Hill, "On the Evidence for the Creative Role of Christian Prophets," New Testament Studies XX (1974): 262

David W. Hoover and Roger W. Leenerts, Enlightened with His Gifts, St. Louis, Missouri: Lutheran Growth, 1979

Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969

Gerhardt Kittel and Gerhardt Friedrich, gen. ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 9 vol. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co. 1978

Leon Morris, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Gospel According to John. Grand Rapids Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co. 1977

J. Armitage Robinson, Commentary on Ephesians. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1979

D. S. Russell, Between the Testaments. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977

E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co., 1979

B. F. Wescott, The Epistles of St. John. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co., 1976

Franklin W. Young, "Jesus the Prophet: A Re-examination," Journal of Biblical Literature LXVIII (1949): 285