

## **Dr. Marv Wilson, Prophets, Session 4, Marks of a True Prophet Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Wilson, Prophets, Session 4, Marks of a True Prophet, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Marv Wilson's teaching session focuses on identifying the characteristics of true prophets versus false prophets.** He emphasizes that there is no single definitive test, but several indicators including a clear divine calling, adherence to scripture, avoidance of pagan practices, and a rejection of professionalism. **Wilson highlights that true prophets often spoke reluctantly, motivated by obedience and compassion, while false prophets were often mercenaries seeking personal gain, telling people what they wanted to hear.** He underscores the importance of moral integrity, aligning actions with words, and the fulfillment of predictions as key differentiators. **The lecture further argues that a prophet's message must align with previous revelations of God's truth, and that the witness of the Holy Spirit is a guiding force.** Finally, he cautions against prioritizing outward success over character, stressing that personal enrichment through ministry is incongruent with true prophetic calling.

**2. 8 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Wilson, Prophets, Session 4 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Prophetic Literature).**



**Wilson\_Prophets\_Session04.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Wilson, Prophets, Session 4, Marks of a True Prophet

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Marv Wilson's "Prophets, Session 4, Marks of a True Prophet":

#### Briefing Document: Marks of a True Prophet

**Overview:** This document summarizes Dr. Marv Wilson's lecture on the characteristics that distinguish true prophets from false prophets in the Old Testament. He emphasizes that there isn't a single test, but rather a combination of factors that help identify genuine prophetic voices. The lecture also touches upon modern implications for discerning prophetic voices within the church today.

#### Key Themes and Ideas:

##### 1. Divine Call and Authority:

- True prophets had a clear sense of being called by God and delivered messages that were not their own. They spoke on behalf of a "divine superior."
- Wilson uses the analogy of a "postman delivering somebody else's message" to describe the role of the *navi* (prophet).
- They did not seek connection with the ultimate reality through pagan means like divination and the occult prevalent in their time.
- Quote: "the Spirit of God was coming upon the prophet as he spoke, gave a message in behalf of a divine superior."

##### 1. Reluctance and Obedience:

- Being a true prophet was not a desirable or popular position. Prophets often faced derision, rejection, and even death.
- They spoke out of obedience to their divine call, driven by a "commitment to the love of truth" and compassion for their people who had strayed from God's teachings.
- Quote: "The prophet that was the true prophet spoke God's word, and often reluctantly. No one wanted to be a prophet."

### 1. **Rejection of Professionalism and Materialism:**

- True prophets did not act as mercenaries or paid specialists. They did not have "materialistic motive[s] in mind for service".
- False prophets, like Balaam, were often motivated by financial gain or to tell leaders what they wanted to hear, rather than what people needed to hear. This echoes the issues of court prophets in the ancient Near East.
- Quote: "False prophets then were often mercenaries... there was the tendency for these prophets to say what the people wanted to hear... rather than to speak what the people really needed to know."

### 1. **Prophetic Balance: Correction and Hope:**

- True prophets challenged the status quo, often confronting people about their sins. They "stroked against the fur," according to Wilson.
- They called people "back to covenantal faithfulness," not to new religious ideas.
- Wilson emphasizes that the true prophetic ministry should have a balance of "correction, calling people to accountability, but also embracing love with hope." He cautions against the extremes of constant scolding (the "far right" in the church) and the "peace and prosperity" gospel (making people "secure in Zion").
- Quote: "The prophets were people who were not afraid to let it fly." "the prophetic word comforts and corrects."

### 1. **Speaking in the Lord's Name with True Authority:**

- A key mark of a true prophet was speaking in Yahweh's name, understanding that a name reveals the character and essence of the one.
- Praying "in Jesus' name" means doing so with His authority, power, and person.
- False prophets can also use God's name, even predicting miracles that come true, and yet not be from God.
- Quote: "False prophets even spoke in the Lord's name... When we pray in Jesus' name, we are doing so in His authority, in His power, in His person."

### 1. **Discipleship and Knowing Character:**

- True understanding of a person's heart and character comes through discipleship, spending time with that person, just as the twelve were called "to be with Him" (Jesus).
- "You get to know the heart of somebody...not just what they say, and it's what they do and how they live that really reveals that."
- Wilson uses the illustration of dating to show how people tend to hide their true selves early on, but their true character is revealed with time. He relates this back to how one should discern prophets.

### 1. **Supernatural Support (Signs and Wonders):**

- Miracles can "authenticate or corroborate the messenger and His message", but they do not compel belief by themselves.
- Wilson points out three major clusters of miracles in the Old Testament associated with Moses (Egypt), Elijah (Northern Kingdom), and Daniel (Babylon), to show the power of God over other gods in the pagan settings.
- Examples given are the plagues of Egypt defeating Egyptian deities, Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel, and Daniel's time in Babylon.
- Quote: "In each of those places in Babylon, Marduk, who was the city god of Babylon...did not come through. It was a young Hebrew boy whom God used as a prophet."

### 1. **High Moral Integrity:**

- True prophets lived exemplary moral lives. They "walked their talk."
- False prophets are described in the Bible as drunkards, profane, wicked, adulterous, and liars.
- Wilson emphasizes that character takes precedence over outward success and blessing of one's ministry, and he cautions against equating material prosperity with God's favor.
- Quote: "I believe that character takes precedence over outward success and blessing of one's ministry."

### 1. **Fulfillment of Predictions:**

- Historical verification of prophecies is a critical factor in distinguishing true from false prophets.
- Wilson uses the example of Hananiah and Jeremiah to illustrate this point. Hananiah, who predicted a short captivity, was ultimately proven false when his prophecy did not come true.
- Quote: "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken."

### 1. **Consistency with Previous Revelation:**

- A true prophetic message should align with and not contradict or disagree with previous revelation from God.
- He uses the illustration of someone saying "this is the will of God for me" to justify their actions when those actions directly contradict biblical teaching.
- He brings up the example of robbing a bank to show how ridiculous it would be to pray for success in something so obviously immoral.
- Quote: "Scripture can't teach one thing, and what I claim is the will of God, another."

### 1. **Inner Witness of the Spirit and Corporate Discernment:**

- While the witness of the Holy Spirit is a subjective test, it is still a way that God can guide.
- In the New Testament, Paul says "the Spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet" suggesting corporate discernment is important.

### **Modern Implications:**

- The church today should be aware of the need for prophetic balance, incorporating both correction and hope in their message.
- The church needs to be aware of the subtle deception of false prophets.
- Character is paramount and is more important than outward success and material gain when evaluating religious leaders.
- Discernment should come from understanding a person's heart and life, not just their words or apparent results.

- It is important to test what is being said or claimed against scripture.

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Wilson's lecture provides a comprehensive look at the multifaceted nature of true prophetic ministry in the Old Testament. By understanding the markers of a true prophet, believers can better discern genuine messages from God while also being aware of the dangers of false prophets. The lecture's lessons also resonate today, calling for a critical evaluation of the messages and messengers within the modern church and how we evaluate our spiritual leaders.

## 4. Study Guide: Wilson, Prophets, Session 4, Marks of a True Prophet

### Marks of a True Prophet: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What are three marks of a true prophet, as outlined in this session?
2. How did true prophets differ from false prophets in terms of their motivation and compensation?
3. What are the two extremes of church teaching mentioned by the speaker, and how do they relate to the prophetic role?
4. According to Deuteronomy 13:1-5, what should be the consequence for a prophet who speaks in the name of another god?
5. What is the significance of praying "in Jesus' name," according to the lecture?
6. Why is discipleship important for discerning a true prophet?
7. What three Old Testament figures are associated with clusters of miracles?
8. How does the speaker define "moral integrity" as a characteristic of a true prophet?
9. What Old Testament figure did the speaker use to exemplify the importance of moral character?
10. How does the story of Hananiah demonstrate the importance of fulfilling predictions?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. True prophets had a clear call from God, emphasized that their words were not their own but from the Spirit of God, and avoided pagan divination practices. They also did not seek professional gain.
2. True prophets spoke God's word out of obedience and a commitment to truth, often reluctantly. False prophets, on the other hand, were often mercenaries, seeking financial gain and saying what people wanted to hear.

3. One extreme is constant scolding and negativity, while the other is a sense of complacency that everything is okay. True prophets need to bring a balance of correction and love.
4. According to Deuteronomy, a prophet who speaks in the name of another god, even if they perform miracles, should be put to death because they preached rebellion against God.
5. Praying in Jesus' name signifies doing so in His authority, power, and person, recognizing the character and essence represented by that name. It's more than just saying the name, it's acting in his character.
6. Discipleship allows one to see a person's true character, motivations, and heart over time, revealing if they are genuine or a fake, making it easier to discern a true prophet.
7. Moses is associated with miracles in Egypt, Elijah with miracles in the Northern Kingdom during the time of Ahab, and Daniel with miracles in Babylon.
8. Moral integrity, as a characteristic of a true prophet, means that the prophet's life must be an example of how he expects others to live, he must "walk his talk" with an exemplary life.
9. The speaker used Joseph (and also Abraham) as an example, though noting that Joseph wasn't typically called a "prophet," to exemplify moral character and his God-given ability to interpret dreams.
10. Hananiah's false prophecy of a quick return from Babylonian exile and subsequent death within a year of the true prophecy of Jeremiah's demonstrated the importance of historical verification for determining a true prophet.



## Essay Questions

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in essay format.

1. Compare and contrast the characteristics of true and false prophets, drawing upon specific examples from the lecture. Discuss how these characteristics might be applied to discerning spiritual leadership today.
2. The lecture emphasized both correction and comfort as components of prophetic ministry. How can churches achieve a balance between these two aspects, and what are the potential dangers of neglecting either one?
3. Explore the significance of miracles in the Old Testament and the purpose they served in relation to the prophets. How do these miraculous events authenticate the prophets' message and challenge other religious traditions of the time?
4. Discuss the role of moral character in prophetic ministry, according to the lecture. How does one's moral life impact their authority and credibility? How might these criteria be used to assess modern leaders?
5. The lecture identifies several criteria for testing prophetic claims, including the confirmation of past revelation, the fulfillment of prediction, and the witness of the Spirit. Explain each of these criteria and why each one is important in distinguishing a true prophet from a false one.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Navi:** The Hebrew word for prophet, understood as one who delivers a message from God, like a postman.
- **Pagan Divination:** Seeking to connect with ultimate reality through occult means, often involving naturalistic or pagan practices.
- **Mercenary Prophet:** A prophet motivated by financial gain, offering services for fees rather than being driven by a divine call.
- **Syncretism:** The merging of different beliefs, often resulting in a mixture of religions.
- **Covenantal Faithfulness:** The concept of remaining true to the terms of the covenant relationship between God and the people of Israel, as established in the Torah.
- **Ko Amar Adonai:** A Hebrew phrase, meaning "Thus says the Lord," a formulaic introduction to prophetic messages, signifying that the words are of God.
- **Panim el Panim:** A Hebrew phrase, meaning "face to face," used to describe the intimate communication between Moses and God.
- **Hamsin:** A sandstorm from the desert stirring up sand particles that can cause darkness.
- **Kissei Eliyahu:** The "chair of Elijah", a symbolic chair present at circumcisions in Judaism, invoking Elijah as guardian of the covenant.
- **Halak:** The Hebrew word for "walking" or proceeding daily with God, emphasizing a way of life characterized by humility.
- **Zaniyut:** A Hebrew word generally translated as humility.
- **Charisma:** A New Testament concept referring to gifts of the spirit, distinct from the Old Testament office of prophet.
- **Hermeneutical Principles:** Rules and methods for interpreting scripture, particularly prophetic texts.

## 5. FAQs on Wilson, Prophets, Session 4, Marks of a True Prophet, Biblealearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions About True Prophets

1. **What are some key characteristics that distinguish a true prophet from a false one?** A true prophet demonstrates several characteristics: a clear call from God, an emphasis on conveying God's word rather than their own, a rejection of pagan divination or occult practices, and a shunning of professional or mercenary motivations. They speak God's message often with reluctance, motivated by obedience to the divine call, compassion for others and commitment to truth. Additionally, they don't seek to be popular or to tell people what they want to hear but rather focus on calling people back to covenantal faithfulness. They often challenge the status quo.
2. **Why is the motive of a prophet so important and how does it affect their message?** A prophet's motivation is crucial because it directly impacts the authenticity of their message. True prophets are driven by a divine call, love for God and humanity, and a commitment to truth. They speak out of obedience, often facing rejection and hardship. False prophets, on the other hand, are often motivated by personal gain, such as financial rewards or popularity, and are more likely to tell people what they want to hear, even if it deviates from God's true message, which can include false promises of peace and prosperity.
3. **How do true and false prophets approach the status quo and the established ways of life in their societies?** True prophets frequently challenge the status quo, seeking to unsettle people and call them back to the principles and ethics of their covenant with God. They are not afraid to deliver messages of correction and reproof, even if it makes them unpopular. False prophets, in contrast, tend to uphold the existing order, often assuring people that everything is fine even when it isn't, which reinforces the status quo and prevents necessary change.
4. **How can one recognize a false prophet who speaks in the Lord's name or uses religious language?** Identifying a false prophet who uses religious language can be challenging. While they may employ religious vocabulary and even claim to act in God's name, their true nature is revealed through discipleship or spending time with them. Look at how they live. Their claims will often contradict their behavior, which lacks consistency and is marked by moral inconsistencies. Also, their message may be deceitful or twisted in order to take advantage of people.

5. **What role do miracles and signs play in authenticating a true prophet?** While miracles and signs can support the authenticity of a prophet's message, they are not the sole determining factor. God does perform miracles to confirm His messengers and their messages, as seen with Moses, Elijah, and Daniel. However, the Bible also indicates that false prophets and even Satan can perform signs and miracles, which demonstrates that these alone do not establish the authenticity of a true prophet. Ultimately, miracles serve to point to God's power and message rather than being an end in themselves.
6. **How is moral integrity a crucial aspect of a true prophet's life and ministry?** A true prophet is characterized by a life of high moral integrity, where their actions align with their words. Their moral character is an attestation to their authority and is essential because God's people are meant to be a revelation of His character. False prophets often display moral corruption, including drunkenness, wickedness, adultery, and lying, which reveals a disconnect between their message and their behavior. This is important, as outward success or material prosperity is not the mark of a true prophet or leader.
7. **How can the fulfillment of a prophet's predictions help determine their authenticity, and what are the limitations of this test?** The fulfillment of a prophet's predictions is a significant factor in determining their authenticity. If a prophecy spoken in the Lord's name does not come to pass, it is a sign that the prophet is false. However, this is not the only factor to consider. As seen in the example of Hananiah and Jeremiah, it's important to note that not all prophets were always correct in every single prediction, making it necessary to evaluate all of the different characteristics described in these sources.
8. **Why is it important for a prophetic message to align with previous revelation of God's truth and how does this apply to contemporary situations?** A prophetic message must align with previous revelation of God's truth, as the message must not contradict God's teachings. If a person claims to be acting by the will of God, their actions must be consistent with what Scripture teaches. This is a key principle for discernment in contemporary situations and for avoiding deception. Claims that contradict what God has previously revealed in Scripture should be viewed with skepticism, even if the person appears to be influential or well-respected. The witness of the Spirit of God, which is also subjective, must be considered in combination with these other tests.