The Bible tells us to discern the origin of prophecies. **“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil”** (**1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 NIV**). According to the scriptures, we should ‘test all prophets and prophecies.’ The Bible gives us all the information we need to identify false prophets and prophecies.

“Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ” (1 John 4:1) Biblical ‘testing’ will help us to identify false prophets and prophecies.

1. Real prophecy strengthens the church.

“Let love be your highest goal! But you should also desire the special abilities the Spirit gives—especially the ability to prophesy. For if you have the ability to speak in tongues, you will be talking only to God, since people won’t be able to understand you. You will be speaking by the power of the Spirit, but it will all be mysterious. But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them. A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church.” (1 Corinthians 14:1-4 NLT).

Genuine prophesy strengthens the entire church, but false prophets and prophecies do not.

2. Let the others evaluate what is said to access whether it is indeed a word from God. **“Let two or three people prophesy, and let the others evaluate what is said.” (1 Corinthians 14:29 NLT)** Listening what others, especially mature Christians, think can be beneficial.

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3. Don't be easily excited or alarmed by purported prophecy**.**

"Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us." (2 Thessalonians 2:2)

4. Test prophecies against Bible teachings**.**

"Do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here." (1 John 4:1-3)

5. Gauge the character of "prophets."

"Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions." (**Matthew 7:15-20 NLT**)

6. Christian discipleship is not confirmed by prophecy**.**

"On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name

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and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'" (Matthew 7:22-23) Rather, Christian discipleship is confirmed by obedience. "Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter." (**Matthew 7:21b**)

7. Reject those who say the day of the Lord has already begun. **"Let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him. Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us." (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2)**

"And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately." (Matthew 24:6)

"Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming . . . 'The end is near.' Do not follow them" (Luke 21:8 NIV).

8. Remember Jesus' warnings of deceit and false prophecy.

"Jesus told them, 'Don't let anyone mislead you, for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah.' They will deceive many.'" (Matthew 24:4,5 NLT)

"And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people." (Matthew 24:11)

"Then if anyone tells you, 'Look, here is the Messiah,' or 'There he is,' don't believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones. See, I have warned you about this ahead of time. 'So if someone tells you, 'Look, the

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Messiah is out in the desert,' don't bother to go and look. Or, 'Look, he is hiding here,' don't believe it!" (Matthew 24:23-26)

9. Any prophet whose prediction fails must be branded as false, even if he claims to speak for God**.**

"But any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god must die. But you may wonder, 'How will we know whether or not a prophecy is from the Lord?' If the prophet speaks in the Lord's name but his prediction does not happen or come true, you will know that the Lord did not give that message. That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared." (**Deuteronomy 18:20-22**)

The mere claim is *false* if it goes unfulfilled. Check any prophecy against the Bible. **"Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world." (1 John 4:1**)

God *never* contradicts himself. **"Suppose there are prophets among you or those who dream dreams about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, and the predicted signs or miracles occur. If they then say, 'Come, let us worship other gods'—gods you have not known before—do not listen to them. The Lord your God is testing you to see if you truly love him with all your heart and soul. Serve only the Lord your God and fear him alone. Obey his commands, listen to his voice, and cling to him. The false prophets or visionaries who try to lead you astray must be put to death, for they encourage rebellion against the Lord your God, who redeemed you from slavery and brought you out of the land of Egypt. Since they try to lead you astray from the way the Lord your God commanded you to live, you must put them to death. In this way you will purge the evil from among you. Suppose someone secretly entices you—even your brother, your son or daughter,**

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your beloved wife, or your closest friend—and says, 'Let us go worship other gods'—gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known. They might suggest that you worship the gods of peoples who live nearby or who come from the ends of the earth. But do not give in or listen. Have no pity, and do not spare or protect them. You must put them to death! Strike the first blow yourself, and then all the people must join in. Stone the guilty ones to death because they have tried to draw you away from the Lord your God." (Deuteronomy 13:1-10)

False prophets discovered among the God's people of the Old Covenant were to be executed. Under the New Covenant, Christians are to reject false prophets and their prophecies. **"Watch out that you are not deceived, for many will come in my name, claiming . . . 'The time is near.' Do not follow them'" (Luke 21:8 NIV).**

10. False prophets will try to hide who they really are. They disclaim the responsibility for the accuracy that goes with the office**.**

"On that day people will be ashamed to claim the prophetic gift. No one will pretend to be a prophet by wearing prophet's clothes. He will say, 'I'm no prophet; I'm a farmer. I began working for a farmer as a boy.' And if someone asks, 'Then what about those wounds on your chest?' he will say, 'I was wounded at my friends' house!'" (Zechariah 13:4-6)

11. God's holy Spirit could never be the source of error**.**

"The Helper, the Holy Spirit which the Father will send in my place, will teach you everything and remind you of everything that I have taught you" (John 14:26 AAT).

"I write you these things about those who would deceive you. As for you, the anointing that you received from him remains in you, so that you do not need anyone to teach you. But his anointing teaches you about everything and is true

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and not false, just as it taught you, remain in him" (1 John 2:26,27 NAB).

12. False prophets invent their own prophesies from their own imaginations.

"Then this message came to me from the Lord: 'Son of man, prophesy against the false prophets of Israel who are inventing their own prophecies. Say to them, 'Listen to the word of the Lord. This is what the Sovereign Lord says: What sorrow awaits the false prophets who are following their own imaginations and have seen nothing at all!'" (Ezekiel 13:1-3 NLT)

"Now, son of man, speak out against the women who prophesy from their own imaginations." (Ezekiel 13:17 NLT)

False prophets utter false prophecies!

13. The Bible predicts that there will be false prophets and what will happen to them**.**

"But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves." (2 Peter 2:1) In fact, it speaks of "many false prophets." (1 John 4:1)

14. False prophets are like straw, but God's word is like grain. God's word is like a hammer that pulverizes rock**.** (**Jeremiah 23:25-32)**

False prophets and their prophecies are worthless. The Bible helps to identify and expose false prophets and their prophecies.

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