

Biblical vs. Pagan Prophecy

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12 And again, Esai'as saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jeru-

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build upon another man's foundation:

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

24 Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achai'a to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's

that do not believe in Jesus, and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

2 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and with you be refreshed.

3 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

1 GREETINGS TO YOU PHĒBĒ, my sister, who is a servant of the church which is at Ephesus. That ye have heard of my prayer, as to some thing which ye assuredly her in my evening business she hath need of your help, she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

2 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

3 Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only give thanks, but so all the church do.

4 Likewise greet the church which is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epēnetus, who is the firstfruits of Achai'a unto Christ.

5 Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

6 Salute Amplias my beloved in the Lord.

7 Salute Urbane, our helper in Christ, and Stach'us my beloved.

8 Salute the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

9 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

10 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

11 Salute Asyn'critus, Phlegon, Hermas, Pat'rōbas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

12 Salute Philo'onus, and Julia, and Nymphas, and Olympas, and the brethren which are with them.

13 Salute my kinsman and fellow-labourer in the Lord, my sister Phoebe, which is a deaconess. Salute the churches of Asia, which are with you.

14 Salute the brethren which are with you, and greet every one which is so named.

15 Salute the brethren which are with you, and greet every one which is so named.

16 Salute the brethren which are with you, and greet every one which is so named.

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PROPHECY

What differences between pagan and biblical prophecy did you notice?

all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12 And again, Esai'as saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, and in the love of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the love of every one of you.

14 And as ye have obeyed, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

15 Nevertheless, as ye have written to me, I have written to you in some things, that is given to me of God,

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God,

17 In those things whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jeru-

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21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now having no more parts, and having a

journey, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with you.

24 I desired to see you into Macedonia and Achai'a to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

25 I have desired to come unto you, but I have been hindered, that I might have brought you some gift, and that I might have ministered unto you in carnal things.

26 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

27 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

28 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's

and that my service which ye have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

22 That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and with you be refreshed.

23 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

CHAPTER 16

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in the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

13 Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14 Salute Asyn'critus, Phlegon, Hermas, Pat'robas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with

them.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

17 Salute you, brethren, which cause divisions contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.

19 Salute you, brethren, which are abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

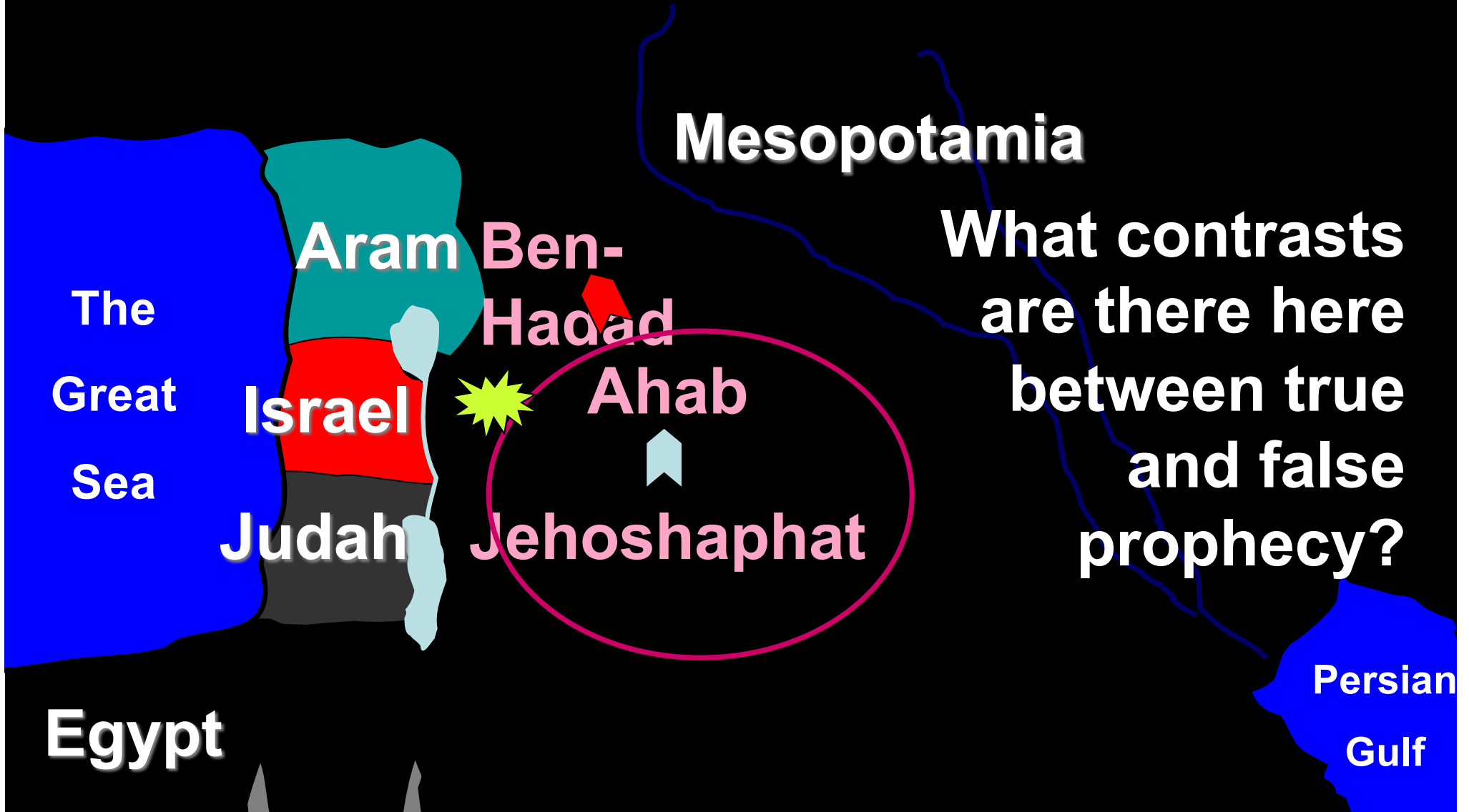
21 Timoth'cus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosip'ater, my kinsmen, salute you.

22

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1 Kings 22

The Aramean Threat



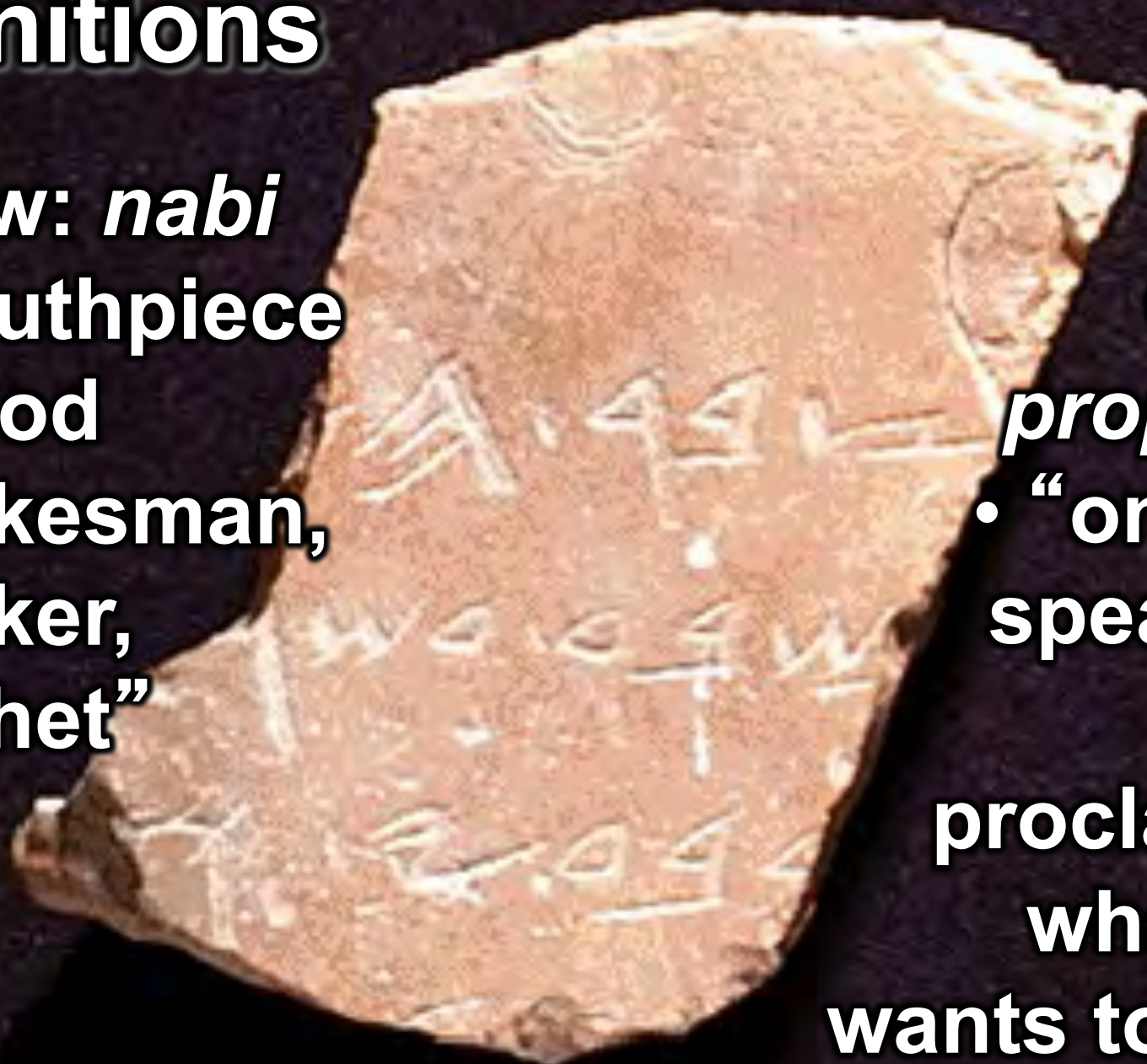
**“Oh, Lord,
use me as You will
—especially as your
advisor!”**



Definitions

Hebrew: *nabi*

- a mouthpiece for God
- “spokesman, speaker, prophet”



Greek:

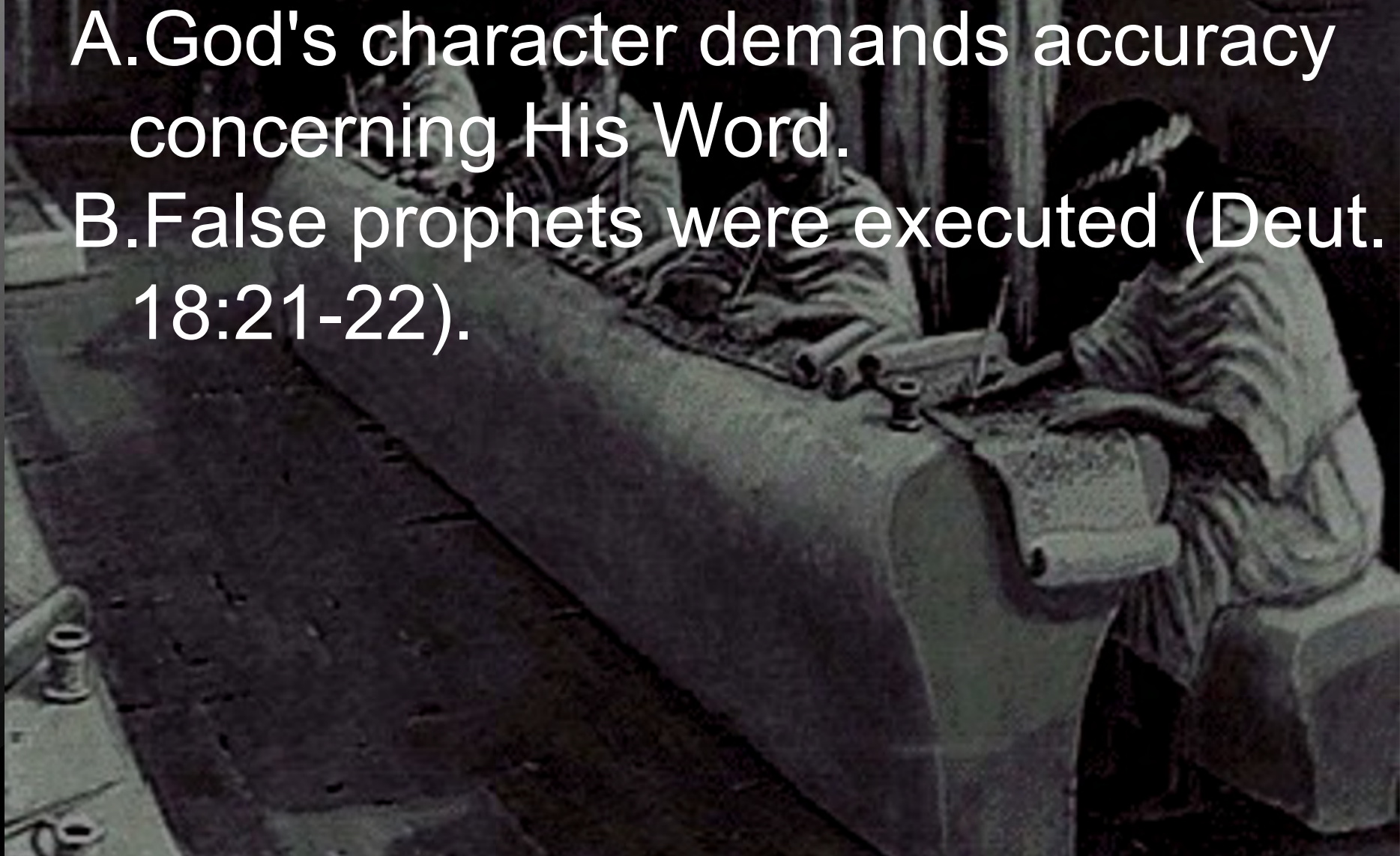
prophetes

- “one who speaks for God, proclaiming what God wants to make known”

Why Are Requirements of True Prophecy Necessary?

A. God's character demands accuracy concerning His Word.

B. False prophets were executed (Deut. 18:21-22).



Prophecy of a Prophet given through Moses (Deut. 18:15)



“I will raise up a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell the people everything I command him.”

Tests of a True Prophet (Deut. 18:18-20)



**1. Predictions
100% true**

**2. Worships the
LORD**

Why Are Requirements of True Prophecy Necessary?

- A. God's character demands accuracy concerning His Word.
- B. False prophets were executed (Deut 18:21-22).
- C. Many today claim to utter prophecies from God—so we must be able to discern truth from error.
- D. Equipping comes from knowing God's Word (2 Tim 3:16-17).

WHY IS GOD'S WORD SO VITAL?

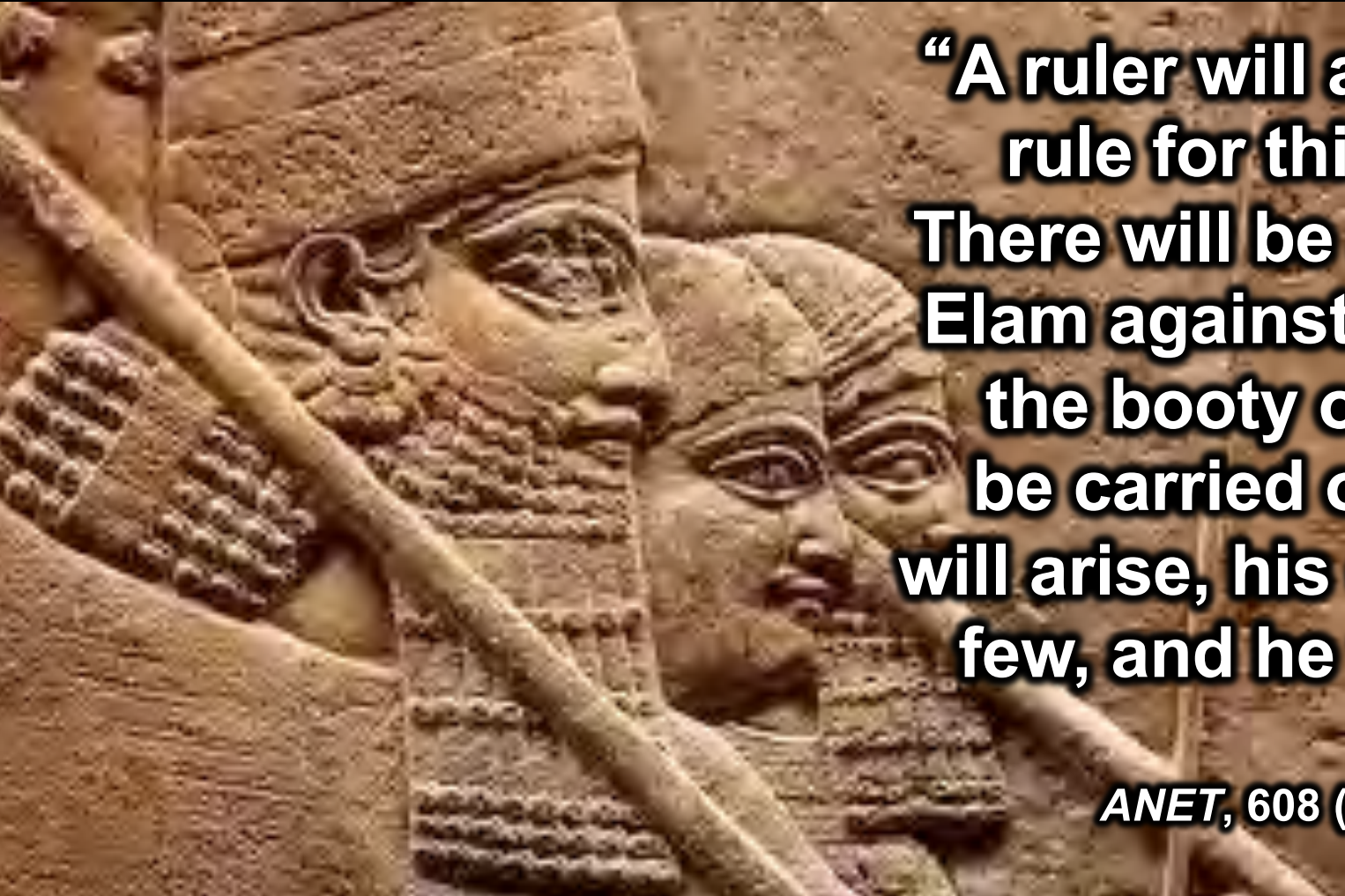
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV)



Did Only Israel Have Prophets?

Akkadian Prophecies (history as “prophecy”)

A photograph of an ancient Akkadian relief sculpture. It shows several figures, likely rulers or deities, with large, stylized heads and beards. The figures are carved in a reddish-brown material. One figure in the foreground is holding a long staff or scepter. The background is a textured, slightly uneven surface.

“A ruler will arise, he will rule for thirteen years. There will be an attack of Elam against Akkad, and the booty of Akkad will be carried off.... A ruler will arise, his days will be few, and he will not rule the land.”

ANET, 608 (Arnold/Beyer, 208)



Did Only Israel Have Prophets?

**Akkadian Prophecies (history as “prophecy”)
Babylonian Omen Texts**

- ***Lecanomancy*** (observing oil dropped in water)



“If I throw oil into water and the oil divides itself into two—the sick person will die; for the campaign: the army will not return”

(Arnold/Beyer, 218)



Did Only Israel Have Prophets?

Akkadian Prophecies (history as “prophecy”)

Babylonian Omen Texts

- ***Lecanomancy*** (observing oil dropped in water)
- ***Libanomancy*** (seeing smoke rise from censer)
- ***Aleuromancy*** (seeing flour scattered on water)
- ***Extispicy*** (observing entrails of sacrificed animal)

“If the entire liver is anomalous—Omen of the king of Akkad regarding catastrophe”

(Arnold/Beyer, 218)



Did Only Israel Have Prophets?

Akkadian Prophecies (history as “prophecy”) Babylonian Omen Texts

- “If a sheep bites his right foot—raids of the enemy will be constant against my land.”
- “If a snake crosses from the right of a man to the left of a man—he will have a good name.”
- “If a snake crosses from the left of a man to the right of a man—he will have a bad name.”

(Arnold/Beyer, 219)

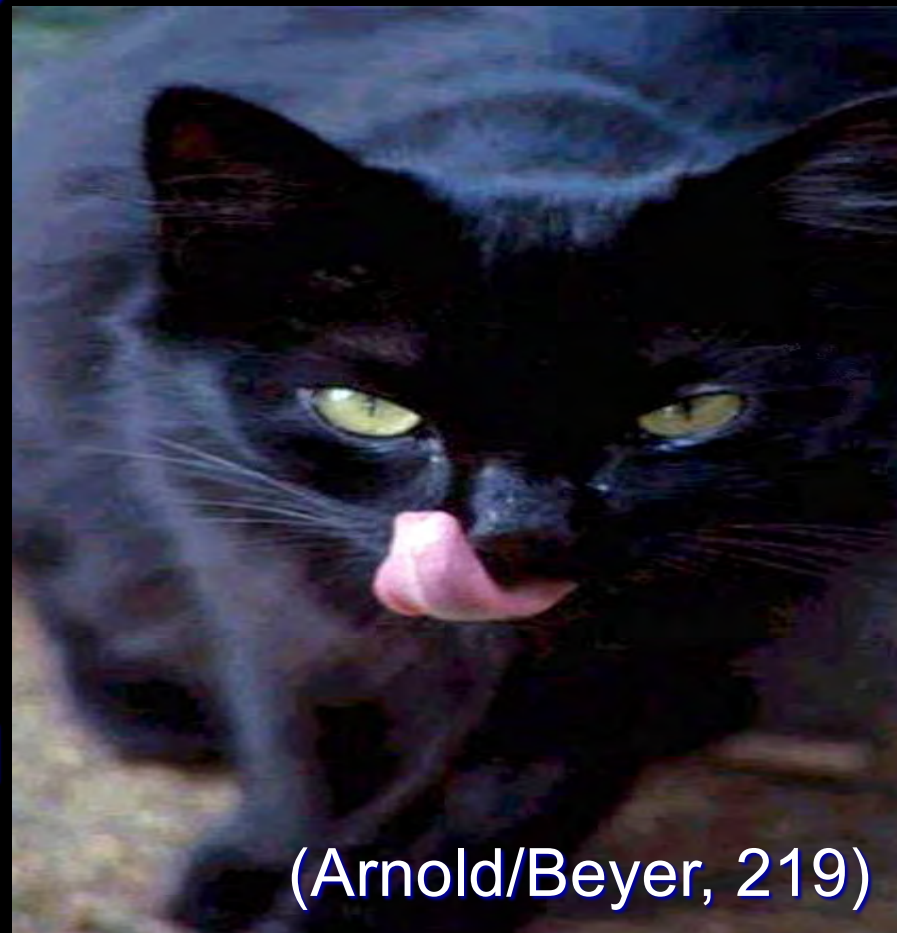


Babylonian Omen Texts

- “If a black cat is seen in a man's house—that land will experience good fortune.”



- “If a white cat is seen in a man's house—for that land hardship will seize it.”



(Arnold/Beyer, 219)

Babylonian Omen Texts



- “If a red cat is seen in a man's house—that land will be rich.”



- “If a yellow cat is seen in a man's house—that land will have a year of good fortune.”

(Arnold/Beyer, 219)

Babylonian Omen Texts

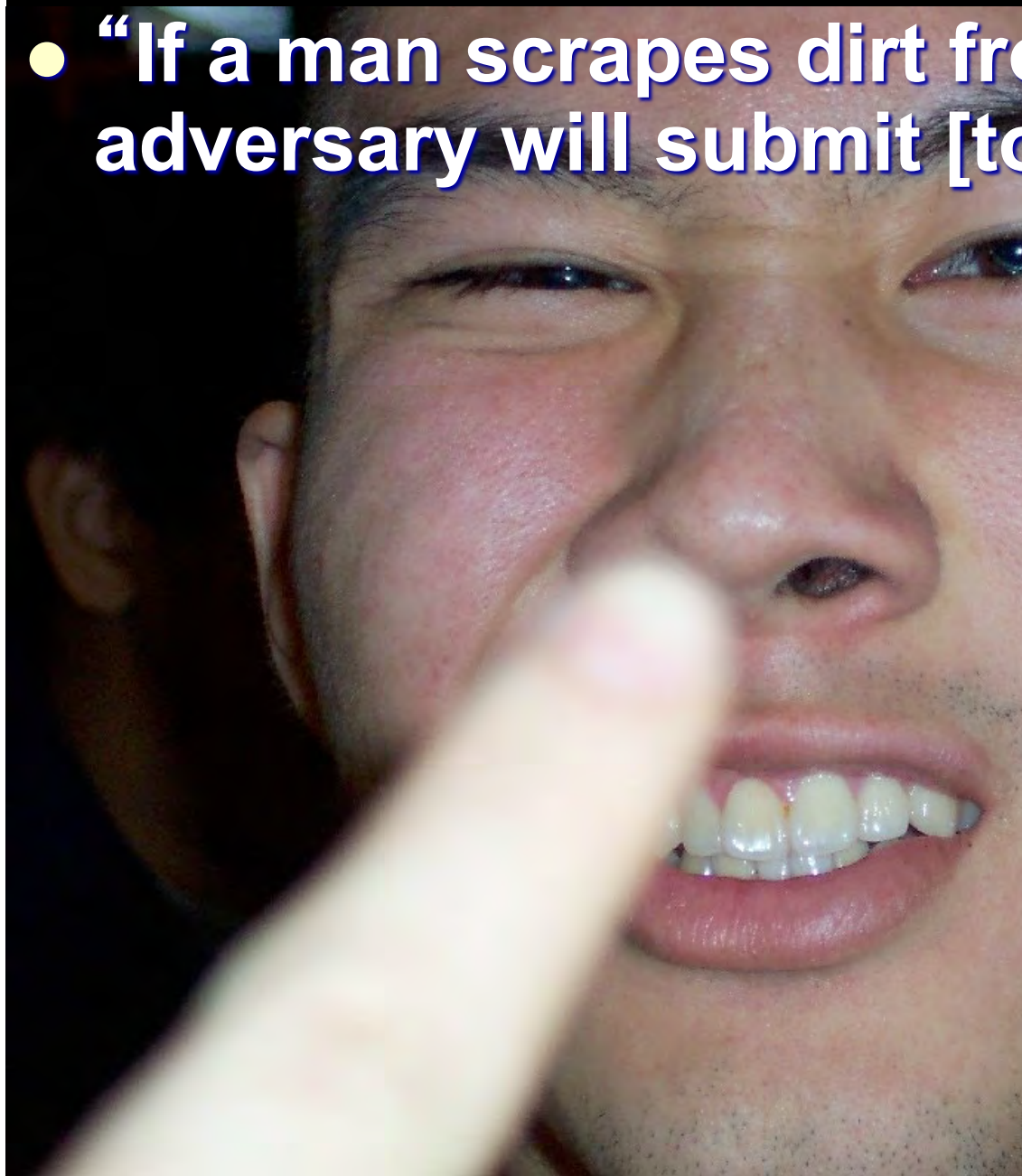
- **“If a multicolored cat is seen in a man's house—that land will not prosper.”**



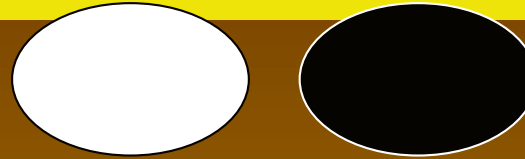
(Arnold/Beyer, 219)

Babylonian Omen Texts

- “If a man scrapes dirt from his nose—his adversary will submit [to him].”



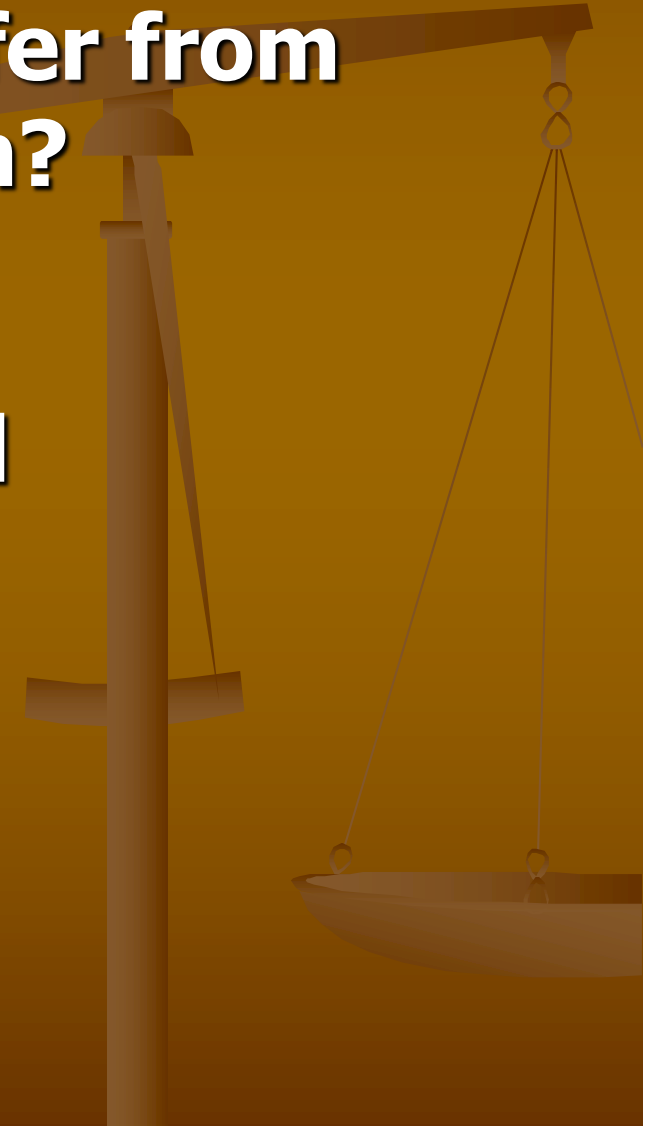
What about Urim & Thummin?



How did this differ from pagan divination?

- **Objective**
- **God-ordained**

• **Exodus 28**





Did Only Israel Have Prophets?

Akkadian Prophecies (history as “prophecy”)

Babylonian Omen Texts

Mari Prophecy Texts (1800-1760 BC)

Mari ecstatics told King Zimri-Lim:

- Council on expeditions
- Warnings on rebellions
- Promises of victory over enemies
- Encouragements to serve the deity



Common Elements of True & False Prophecy

A. Call

B. Signs

C. Content

D. Style



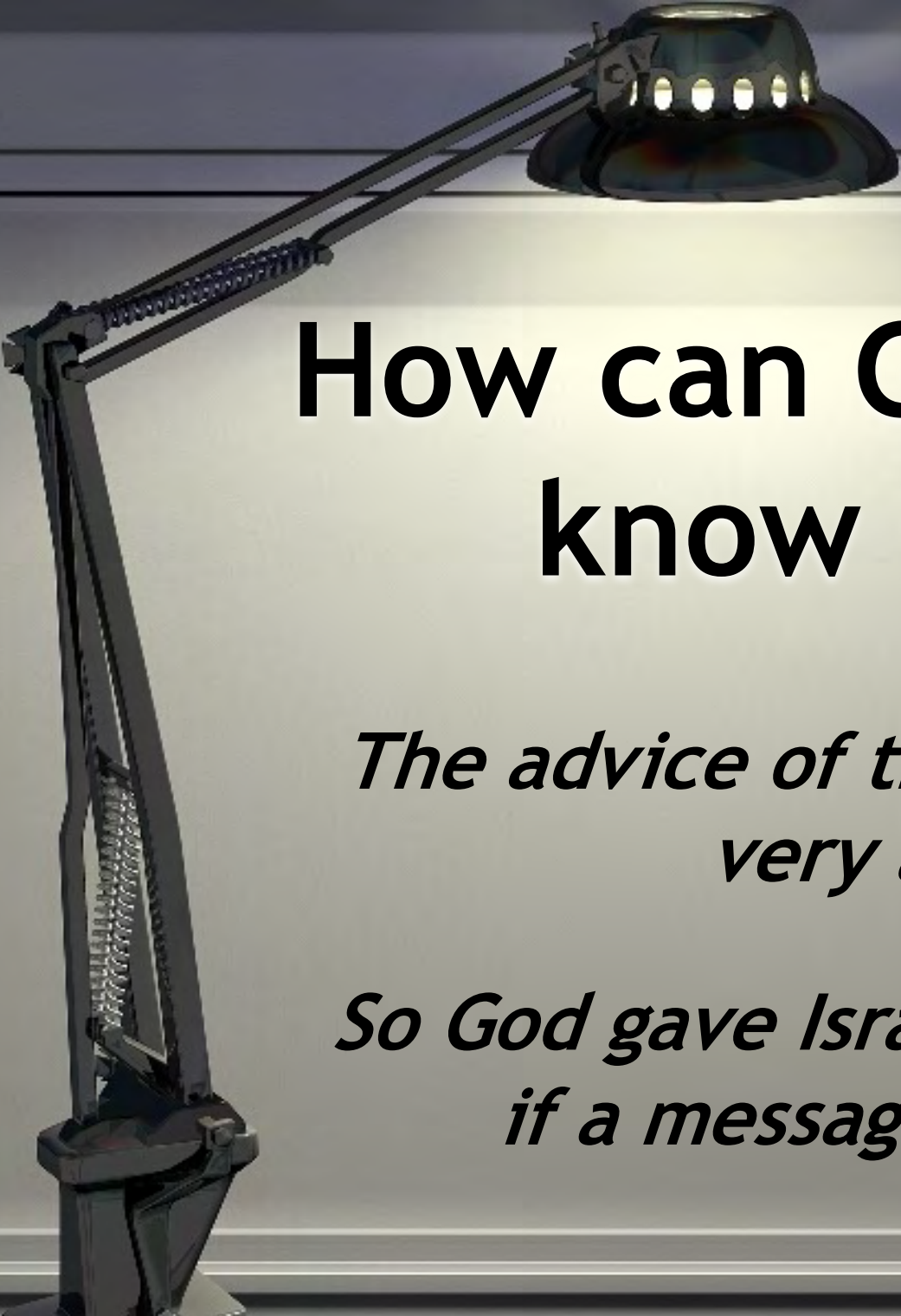
Similarity in Content

"Chemosh said to me, 'Go, take Nebo from Israel.' So I went by night, and fought against it from break of dawn till noon; and I took it and slew all in it, seven thousand men and women..."

**King Mesha Stele, lines 11-12
(830 BC "victory over Omri" in 2 Kings 3)
—Arnold/Beyer, 162; cf. *ANET* (1969), 320-21**

*What modern superstitions
can you think of?*





How can God's people know his will?

*The advice of the world often looks
very attractive!*

*So God gave Israel many ways to tell
if a message was from him.*

How are Prophets Different?

Biblical

Pagan

Unsolicited

Divination

Divine call

Prophet himself

Anywhere

Cultic place

Forth-telling

Fore-telling



False prophecies change

03-29-2001

How are Prophets Different?

Biblical

Pagan

Godly character

Immoral

Mostly men

Mostly women

Inspired

Own thoughts

Own style

Demon possessed

Jeremiah (25:11-12) vs. Hananiah (28:2-3)

True

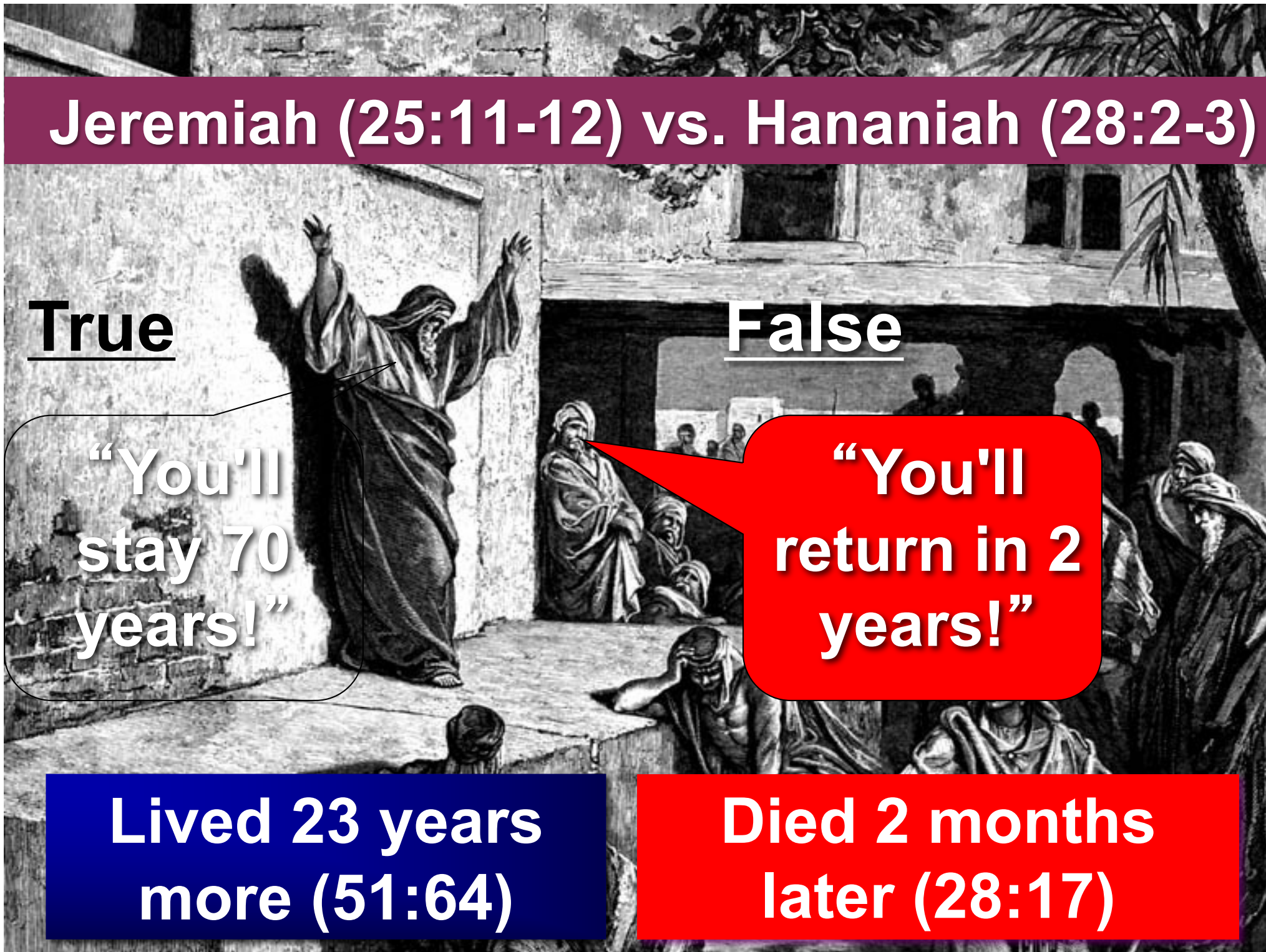
“You'll stay 70 years!”

Lived 23 years more (51:64)

False

“You'll return in 2 years!”

Died 2 months later (28:17)



How are Prophets Different?

Biblical

Godly Motive

Original messages

100% accurate

Persecuted

Pagan

Financial Gain

Plagiarism

Errors of fulfillment

Exalted

Contrasts Between Biblical & Pagan Prophecy

186b-d

Thought Questions:

- A. Which difference between these two types was most significant to you?
- B. Why?

What is Prophecy?

*“knowing this first of all, that **no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.** For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit”*

2 Peter 1:20-21 (ESV)

DISCUSSION GROUP A

What should a church do with a so-called prophet who:

- predicts false events
- falls into moral sin, or
- leads people to false gods?

DISCUSSION GROUP B

Is prophecy “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind” (Wayne Grudem)?

- **Can true prophecy contain errors?**
- **Why or why not?**

DISCUSSION GROUP C

Do you think Grudem's teaching that all believers can prophesy has biblical support (cf. 1 Cor. 12:29 vs. 14:1)?

Support your answer.

DISCUSSION GROUP D

What would you say to someone who claimed that his prophecy is inspired but not equal in authority to Scripture?

Are there different levels of inspiration or inerrancy?

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

12 Forasmuch as he that ministereth to the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

13 Now the God of hope fill you with all manner of peace and kindness, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, brethren, that ye also have good works, and that ye admonish one another to love one another.

15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some respects, so that ye shall know that is true, which is true.

16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministered unto by the will of God, that the Gentiles might be sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

18 For I will not dare to assume anything of which I have not assumed the blame, so that I might make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, in me, that I might bring you to Christ.

stand upon another man's foundation:

21 But as it is written, whom he was not ashamed to call the Gentiles.

22 For when cause also has been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now that I have no more place left here, I will come unto you; and I will tarry with you, that I may see you.

24 Whosoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I desire to see you, and to pass by you into Spain.

25 For I desire to see you, and to pass by you into Spain. For I desire to see you, and to pass by you into Spain.

26 For I desire to see you, and to pass by you into Spain. For I desire to see you, and to pass by you into Spain.

27 When therefore I have performed this, and have seen you, I will come unto you, that I may see you.

28 When therefore I have performed this, and have seen you, I will come unto you, that I may see you.

29 Greet the church of Corinth, and the church of Macedonia, and the church of Achaia, and the church of Jerusalem.

that do not believe in Jesus, and that my service which ye do for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

My sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the love and fellowship of the saints, and she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my wellbeloved Epēnetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.

Greet Mary, who bestowed much labour on us.

Greet Amplias my beloved, and my kinsman, and my fellowlabourer.

Greet my kinsman, and my fellowlabourer, and my kinsman, and my fellowlabourer.

Greet my kinsman, and my fellowlabourer, and my kinsman, and my fellowlabourer.

Apel'les approved in the Lord, which are of the household of Narcissus, which are in the Lord.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

13 Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine.

14 Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, and the brethren which are with them.

15 Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them.

16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, to keep company with them, that they may receive the grace of the Lord, and that they may avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

20 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

21 Greet my kinsmen, salute you.

Wayne Grudem's Definition of Prophecy

“telling something
that God has
spontaneously
brought to mind”

“Why Christians Can Still Prophecy”
Christianity Today (16 Sept 1988), 29

Grudem's View

Prophecy is declaring anything (true or false) that the Spirit brings to one's mind

The above definition was invented in 1988 by Wayne Grudem

OT prophets are parallel to NT apostles

God changed the definition of prophecy from the OT to the NT

God gives some prophecies with errors

Any believer can prophesy

There's two kinds of NT prophecy (fallible and infallible)

Fallible prophecy can be inspired

God sometimes lies

Biblical View

Prophecy is declaring God's inspired and inerrant revelation to others

The above definition has been the teaching of the church for 20 centuries

OT prophets are parallel to NT prophets

God kept the meaning of prophecy consistent between the two testaments

God gives all prophecies without errors (2 Pet. 1:20-21)

Only those with the gift of prophecy can prophesy (1 Cor. 12:29)

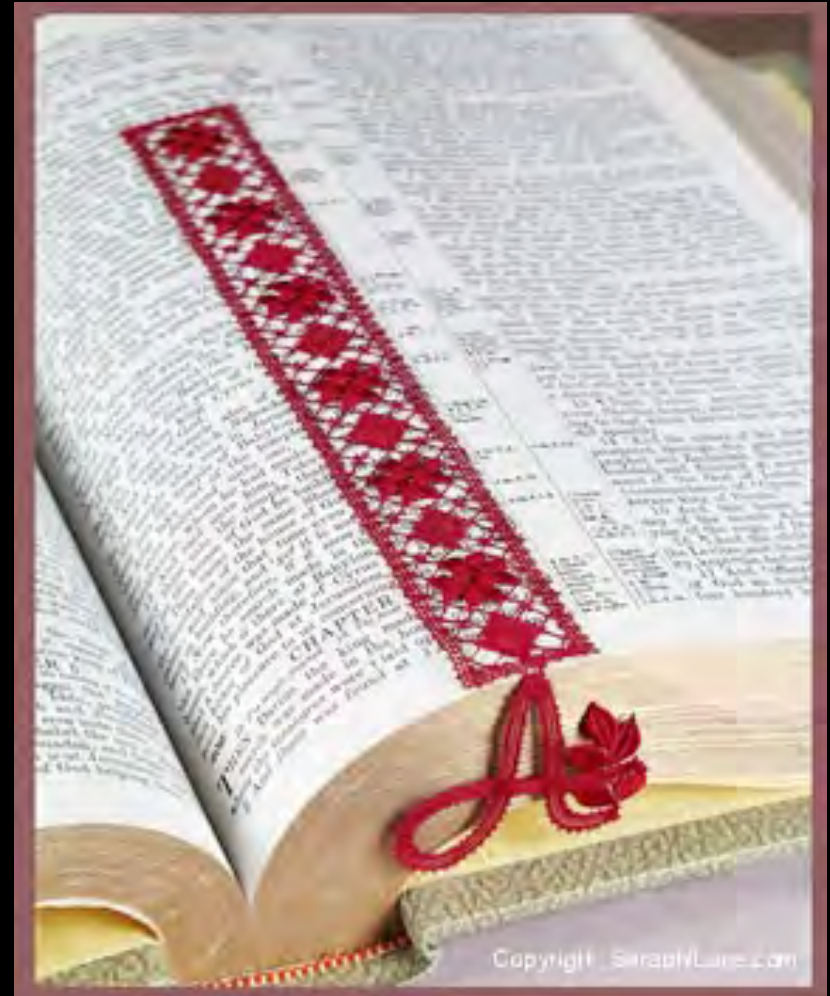
There's one kind of NT prophecy (infallible)

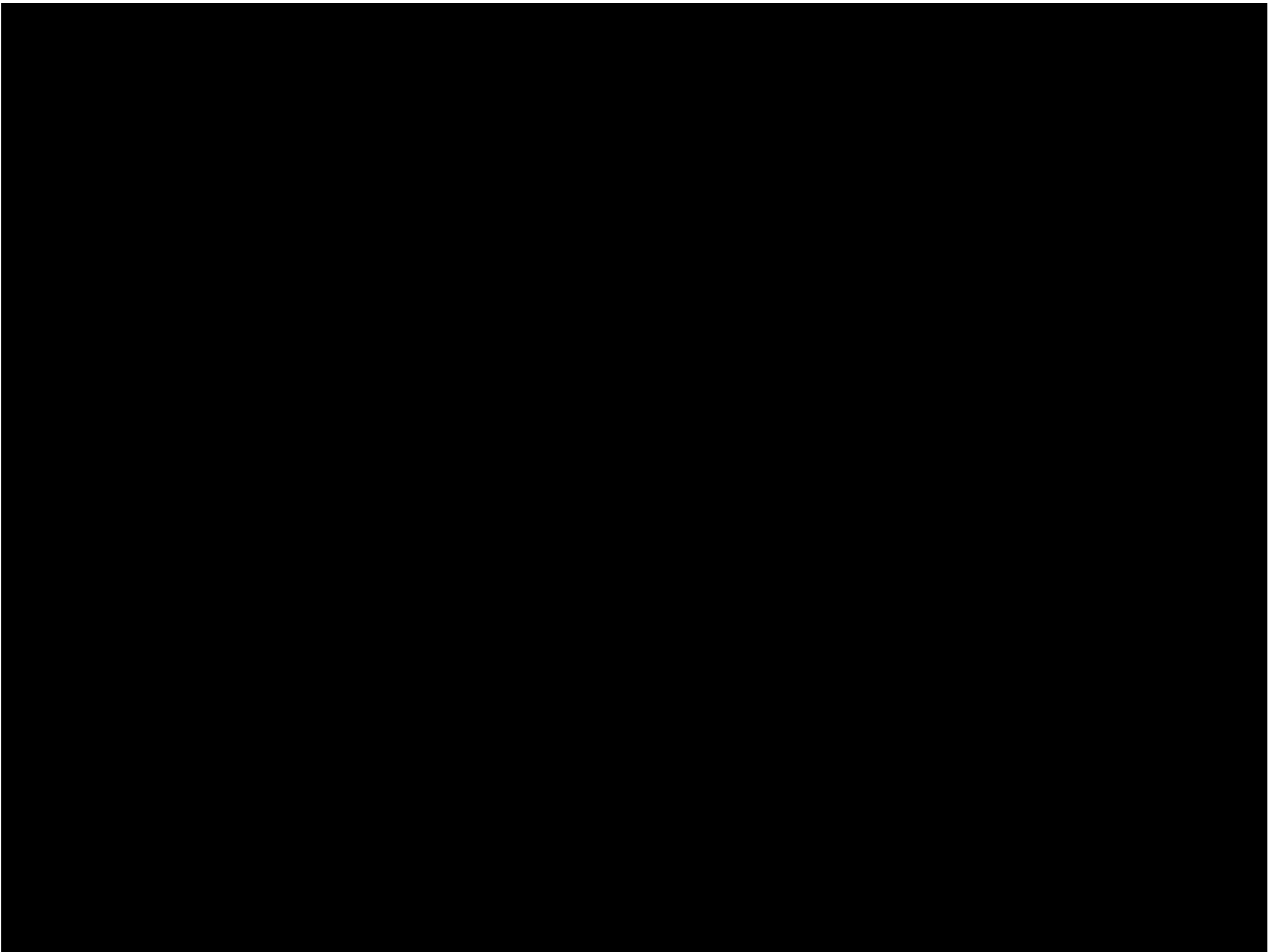
Fallible prophecy is false prophecy (Deut. 13:1-5; 18:14-20)

God always tells the truth since He cannot lie (Heb. 6:18)

Let's hold God's Word in the highest regard!

- In our personal devotional lives
- In our families
- In our work
- In our Bible studies (including this one)





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Tongues versus Prophecy

161m

Contrasts	Tongues	Prophecy
<i>Speaker's Control</i>	Inferior (14:5a)	Superior (14:1)
<i>Relation to Other Gifts</i>	The least important gift (12:28)	The second most important gift (12:28)
<i>Language Used</i>	Foreign (14:10)	Vernacular (14:19)
<i>Corollary Gift</i>	Interpretation of tongues (12:30; 14:27-28)	Discerning of spirits (12:10; 14:29)
<i>Speaker's Knowledge of the Language Being Spoken</i>	Unknown: “utters mysteries with his spirit...my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful” (14:2b, 14)	Known: “pray with my spirit [and] with my mind” (14:15, 19)
<i>Value (without Interpretation)</i>	Harmful: people cannot understand and thus are not edified (14:16-17, 23, 28)	Great: people can understand and thus are edified (14:5b, 24-25)
<i>Edification (without Interpretation)</i>	Self only (14:4a; cf. 10:24; 12:7, 11)	Entire church (14:4b)

Tongues versus Prophecy

161m

Contrasts	Tongues	Prophecy
<i>Direction of Speech is to...</i>	God (14:2)	Men (14:3)
<i>Result in Others</i>	Revelation, knowledge, prophecy, word of instruction (14:6)	Strengthening, encouragement, and comfort (14:3b)
<i>Type of Communication</i>	Speaking (14:6), prayer (14:14), praise (14:16), singing? (14:15b)	Foretelling the future, “forthtelling” or declaring doctrinal truth (14:19)
<i>Purpose</i>	Sign to unbelieving Jews (14:21-22a)	Message to believers (14:22b)
<i>Limitations</i>	Two or three tongues messages in each service (14:27a), speak in turn (14:27b), someone must interpret (14:27c-28)	Two or three prophetic messages in each service (14:29a), speak in turn (14:30-31), weigh what is said (14:29b, 32)
<i>Exhortation</i>	Negative: Do not forbid tongues (14:39b)	Positive: Be eager to prophesy (14:39a)
<i>Agent of Cessation</i>	Self: middle voice (13:8b)	Someone other than self: passive voice (13:8a)

Teaching versus Prophecy

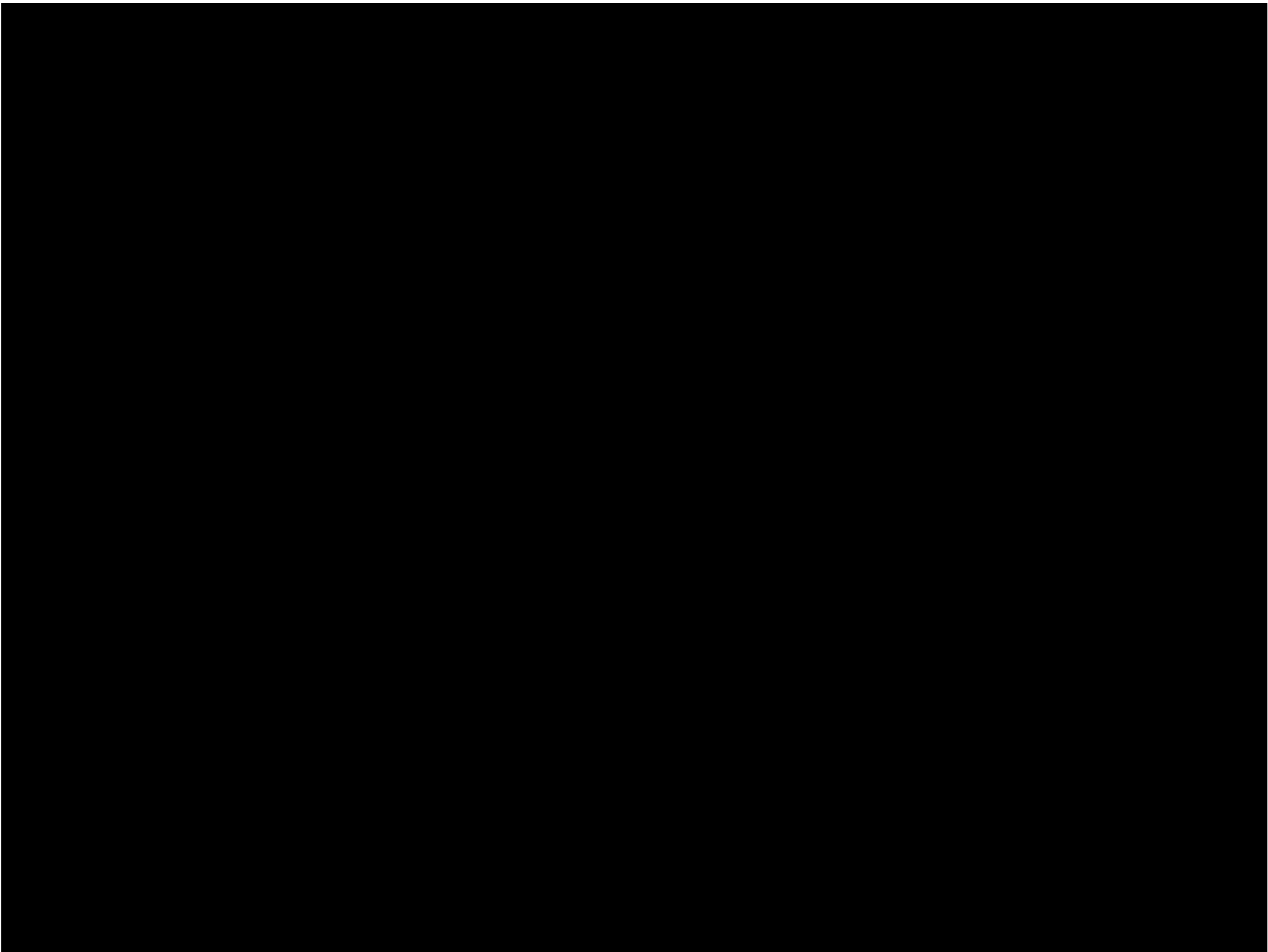
161h

Contrasts	Teaching	Prophecy
<i>Value</i>	Inferior: Teaching is listed after prophecy in the leadership structure of the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1)	Superior: Prophecy has a long OT history of declaring an uninterpreted word of God (2 Pet. 1:20-21) whereas teachers must interpret it
<i>Relation to the Other Gift</i>	A less important gift: listed after prophecy in the priority of the gifts (1 Cor. 12:28)	The second most important gift, superseded only by apostleship (1 Cor. 12:28)
<i>Authority</i>	Less authoritative than prophecy since the teacher must interpret the Bible	More authoritative than teaching as the spoken word is divinely inspired & uninterpreted (2 Pet. 1:20-21)
<i>Source of Truth</i>	God's Word (Col. 3:16)	God's Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21)
<i>Revelatory Nature</i>	Uninspired explanation of already revealed truth (Acts 15:35; 11:12, 26; Rom. 2:21; 15:4; Heb. 5:12)	Inspired foretelling the future or “forth-telling” (declaring doctrinal truth) received by revelation (1 Cor. 14:19, 26, 29-30; Eph. 3:5)

Teaching versus Prophecy

161h

Contrasts	Teaching	Prophecy
Style	Systematic	Spontaneous (Acts 11:28; 21:4, 10-11)
Limitations	No limitation on teaching is given in church services	Two or three prophetic messages per service (14:29a), speak in turn (14:30-31), weigh what is said (14:29b, 32)
Leadership Requirements	Required of elders (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; Tit. 1:9) since the church needs continued teaching of truth through its history	Not required of elders as this would provide too high a standard; also, revelation need not continue after the canon is complete (Rev. 22:18-19)
Foundation for the Church	No—the foundation is not interpreted messages but divinely spoken and written messages from God to apostles and prophets	Foundational with apostleship (Eph. 2:20), meaning that it need not continue through Church history as a foundation is once-for-all (e.g., no apostles today)
Cessation	No hint is given in the NT that this gift has ceased or will do so in the church age	The gift will cease by someone other than self: passive voice (1 Cor. 13:8a; cf. Spiritual Gifts notes, 29)



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