

Ryrie (pp. 85-86) writes:

This word also is used in both a general and a limited sense. In a general sense it means to preach; thus, generally speaking, preaching is prophesying, and the preacher is a prophet in that he speaks the message from God. But the gift of prophecy included receiving a message directly from God through special revelation, being guided in declaring it to the people, and having it authenticated in some way by God Himself. The content of that message may have included telling the future (which is what we normally think of as prophesying), but it also included revelation from God concerning the present. . . .

The gift of prophecy may have been rather widely given in New Testament times, though the record mentions only a few prophets specifically. Prophets foretelling a famine came from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of these was named Agabus (Acts 11:27-28). Mention is made also of prophets in the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1), and Philip had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy (Acts 21:9). Prophets were also prominent in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 14).

Edgar (pp. 83-84) states:

A Prophet although he may also minister otherwise, receives direct revelation from the Lord. His characteristic ministry may normally be described as foretelling or prediction. He is always a spokesman for God. He is similar to the Old Testament prophet. If one does not receive direct revelation and does not predict on occasion, he is not a prophet. The Old Testament states that a prophet must be able to predict. The only examples of a prophet's ministry in the New Testament are examples of prediction. No one can verify that he is a prophet apart from the ability to predict, although he may also receive other revelation. . . .

It is clear from the description of the prophet in the New Testament that no one can demonstrate that he is a prophet apart from an ability to predict the future. The predictions are not vague, general statements, but concern immediate circumstances which may be verified within reasonable time. He most also receive direct, immediate revelation. Any individual who claim to be a prophet merely due to an insight into Scripture is making an erroneous claim. Those who claim that anyone who encourages, exhorts, and consoles is a prophet are also making erroneous claims. Exhorting and encouraging are the results of the prophets' ministry, but they also are the results of the ministries of others who are not prophets. When a prophet prophesies, this results in edification and exhortation, but merely performing the function of exhorting and edifying is no evidence that a man is a prophet. The idea that a prophet is, or ever was, restricted to the local church only is unbiblical.

In the beginning church, individuals described as prophets were rare. Agabus and those with him, and some at Antioch, are called prophets. It is implied that prophets were in the assembly