

Five fold ministry

This chapter taken from the book *When Faith Came* by Franklin Whittenburg © 1998-2006

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Anybody that has been in Christianity for any length of time has heard of the five-fold ministry. You must understand its purpose today as it is being badly abused by many churches to establish “authority” instead of “perfecting” of the saints. Also you must understand what the apostle’s role and the prophets roll in these last days, because what is being taught by the “five fold ministry” is in gross error. I have already addressed the pastor’s role in the “One Set Man” doctrine. The verses that support the five-fold ministry are in Ephesians and 1 Corinthians.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:27-31).

To understand its purpose, lets first look at what constitutes a true apostle. The Bible speaks of many false apostles arising in the last days and deceiving many. Currently there is a huge New Apostolic Network that is trying to claim authority over everybody that claims to be a Christian. In the five-fold ministry, you must be able to tell the difference between a false apostle and a real apostle in these last days. First, all the word “apostle” means in the Bible is “one who is sent”. It is the word “apostolos” in the Greek. How do you tell the difference between an apostle sent by Jesus and a false apostle? The answer is very simple but requires an explanation. The original twelve apostles are considered “foundational” apostles. The Bible says that the Christian is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (Ephesians 2:19-21).

You can see that reaffirmed in Revelation 21:14 in describing the foundation of the holy city New Jerusalem. The stones of the foundation had the names of the twelve apostles of Jesus written in them.

And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Revelation 21:14).

The true church has the leadership on the BOTTOM as the foundation supporting the people and not sitting on the top of the congregation. The true leadership is the "cornerstone", not the "capstone"!

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).

As the Bible plainly teaches, in the true church model, the apostles and prophets in the church are on the BOTTOM supporting the people and not sitting on top of the congregation. That is why the Bible says in (1 Corinthians 12:28) that the apostles were placed **first** in the church after Jesus Christ the cornerstone, as the foundation stones on the very bottom and the prophets second, being placed on top of the apostles, and teachers third, being placed on top of the prophets.

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: (Matthew 20:25-27).

Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand (2 Corinthians 1:23,24).

This is very important! This is where everybody misses this! Any apostle that came after the original twelve **BROUGHT THE SAME DOCTRINE AS THE ORIGINAL TWELVE!!!!** That is the simplest way how Paul said to tell the difference between a true or false apostle.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:8,9).

Paul and Barnabas were both called apostles in the Bible even though they were not one of the original twelve, which shows that the apostolic ministry was still in effect after the original twelve.

Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, (Acts 14:14).

What you have in the New Apostolic Network that you see manifesting today is new apostles trying to establish a new foundation for a new “wineskin” church. They claim that God will not pour out His power into an old “wineskin” church. They claim the Lord is doing a “new thing” or “new paradigm shift”. Many apostles claim that because of the authority of their office in the church that you should not question their credentials or doctrine. As I said before, “It is very important to understand that any Christian can biblically question a pastor, apostle, or prophets doctrine without questioning their authority. But what you see also in the five-fold ministry today is the mentality that you cannot question doctrine **coming** from authority. We see in the Bible, God commended the Church at Ephesus, where coincidentally the five-fold ministry is proclaimed, for testing the apostles and they found them to be liars.

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: (Revelation 2:1,2).

God does not honor someone that blindly follows false apostles, prophets, teachers and pastors just because the person claims they were submitting to the authority God has placed over them. Ignorance may be bliss, but God said His people are destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6)! Jesus said that “the Christian is to be sent forth as sheep among wolves and they are to be wise as serpents”, not “be blind as bats”. In fact, Jesus said that if the blind follow the blind, THEY BOTH would fall into the ditch.

Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch (Matthew 15:14).

If the apostles today do not preach the same gospel as the original twelve, then the Bible says they are false apostles and they have no more authority over anybody in the church than your pet cat or dog does. The moment an apostle says, “the Lord is doing a new thing / paradigm” they are immediately disqualified as a New Testament apostle according to Paul in the Bible (Galatians 1:8,9). It doesn’t matter how many churches are supporting them. The only way that these new apostles can have any authority is in a new church. A wise man once said, “One may build a church, but it won’t be Christ’s church”.

I now want to address the purpose of the prophet in the church today. The Bible speaks of many false prophets that arise in the last days and deceive many. I had some people stop by my house from a certain denomination and they wanted to witness to me. As we talked, I shared some revelations with them in the scriptures that were kind of

“deep”. This caused them to ask me if I was a prophet. It is very dangerous to assume someone is a prophet. I could have said, “Uh, yeah, I am a prophet and the five-fold ministry gives me authority over you. The Lord just told me to start guiding your spiritual walk and to also tell you to give me all your money for my ministry”. See how ridiculous that sounds, but that is what is going on in many churches today. Most people in the church believe that they can tell a false prophet if they miss a prophecy. This is dangerous also because there was a woman that had the ability to use divination by the power of a demon and she could accurately tell the future. Paul rebuked the demon that was in her and her power of divination was gone (Acts 16:16-20). You cannot rely on a missed prophecy as your only test for a prophet. Try the spirits to see if they are of God.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world (1 John 4:1).

Many claiming to be prophets and trying to speak prophecies over other church members are actually “soothsaying” instead of prophesying. The moment someone claims to be speaking “prophecy” to you and they say, “The Lord told me to tell you”, then they are at that moment declaring that your Heavenly Father no longer considers you worthy of fellowship with Him, so He has sent them with a personal message from God to you. This is still the ministry of the Old Testament prophet and not the New Testament prophet. Jesus alone is the only mediator between the true Christian and their Heavenly Father as plainly taught in the book of Hebrews in the New Testament!

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in TIME PAST unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:1,2).

The real New Testament prophet takes and reveals the deeper spiritual knowledge and mysteries found in the Word of God. The scribes interpreted the scriptures naturally while the lawyers taught the laws of God. A scribe teaches people about someone else’s experience with God. A prophet or Christian teaches people about their experience with God.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2).

How do you know when the deeper spiritual truths that are being revealed by the prophet out of the scriptures are truly spiritual truths and not scripture taken out of context? You will receive the revelations in your heart, which is the seat of the Spirit.

And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:30-32).

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (James 3:17).

Most people, when thinking of prophets, focus on the predicting of future events. I want to address this also briefly. The mind is capable of bringing the past into the present, which we call a “memory”. The mind when quickened by the Spirit can also bring the future into the present, which we call a “prophecy”.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come (John 16:12,13).

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20,21).

Many prophecies that the Bible predicted came true in Bible times. How is it possible to see into the future? The Bible says that John was “caught away in the Spirit” and shown the things “which shall be” when he wrote Revelation.

After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne (Revelation 4:1,2).

For John to be taken somewhere by the Spirit and shown the future means that the future had to already exist somewhere, possibly in another dimension, for him to be taken there and shown it and come back and wrote about it. Where is this place located? Science has tried to explain how prophecy is possible which I have included in this book. I just added Bible scripture to support that scientific theory. Please read the chapter “It’s About Time” for a much deeper explanation of how prophecy works.

