299 Prophet (*Propheta*)

This name when it has “h” after “p” does not descend from “I speak out, you speak out,” (*profor, profaris*), but rather from “far” (*procul*) and “voice” (*phonos*), which is sound, because one pronounces something foreseen from a long way off. Wherefore note that men understand as a prophet what the evil were seeing. However not according to that of Job [13:1]: “My eye has seen all these things, and I have understood them all.” Which Gregory explaining, *Moralia,* book 11,[[1]](#endnote-1) says, When something is shown, or heard, what is not understood, is not a prophecy. Just as is evident from the dream of Pharaoh [Gen. 41:1], and from the vision of Belshazzar [Dan. 5:25]. Wherefore also the false prophecies are distinguished from the true in three ways.

First, as for as the ardor of the revelation, because the good prophesy with the help of the Lord, light, and good angels, but not pseudo-prophets, they follow their own spirit and evil angels.

Second, as for as the prediction of the intention because the intention of the false is some temporal wealth, as it is said in Ezech. 13[:19]: “And they violated me among my people, for a handful of barley, and a piece of bread.” And in Michea [3:5] it is said, “If a man gives not something into their mouth, they prepare war against him.” But the intention of the good is ordained to the right end.

¶ Third, as for as the certitude of the predictions, because the prophecy of the good depends upon divine foreknowledge. Of the evil in truth the foreknowledge of the demons which is only conjectural.

¶ Therefore the prophecy of hidden things is by manifestation out of divine inspiration. And therefore, according Gregory, *Super Ezechielem*,[[2]](#endnote-2) the first homily, prophecy is not only when one predicts the future, but also when one shows the hidden. And it can be concerning the prelate as there in the beginning God created heaven and earth and concerning the present when the soul of Elyseus was present in the holy Giezi, [4 Kings 5:26].

¶ And in these two cases prophecy loses the etymology of its name, because then they do not prophesy what will happen.

¶ Again, it is to be noted that the spirit of prophecy sometimes the mind of the prophet is absent, it is not always present. Therefore, prophecy is rather said as an act for the time dispensed, made available rather than habitual, to the extent when they do not have that spirit of prophecy, they know that they have it as a gift what they have. Where also Elyseus said to Giezi [4 Kings 4:27]: “The Lord has hidden it from me and has not told me.” And Amos [7:14] the prophet with the spirit being absent said, “I am not a prophet,” as if saying, I do not now have the spirit of prophecy.

¶ Christ therefore is significantly called a prophet. First, because of the intellectual secrets. For God is knowledge. However, God is searching the reins and the hearts, [Apoc. 2:23]. Whose eyes are naked and open to all things, whose “word is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword.”

Second, because he is the revealer of things hidden. Wherefore he says in John [15:15]: “All things whatsoever I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you.”

¶ Third, because he is the predictor of future things. Wherefore in John [14:29]: “I have told you before it comes to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe.” And it is said Christ is a great prophet not only because the Lord is a prophet, but because he received the whole spirit which is treated in Heb. [13:14]: “Lasting.” To whom was given the spirit without measure, in whom dwells bodily the plenitude of divinity.

¶ Others have received from his plenitude and for a time, because [Psal. 132:2]: “The ointment on the head, that ran down upon the beard, which ran down to the skirt of his garment.” Therefore, a great prophet will come about whom it is said in Deut. [18:15]: “God will raise up to you a prophet of your brethren.”

1. Gregory, *Moralia* 11.20.31 (PL 75:968): Cum enim aliquid ostenditur, [Col.0968D] vel auditur, si intellectus non tribuitur, prophetia minime est. Vidit namque Pharao per somnium quae erant Aegypto ventura (Genes. XLI, 2, seq.); sed quia nequivit intelligere quod vidit, propheta non fuit. Aspexit Balthasar rex articulos manus scribentis in pariete (Dan. V, 5); sed propheta non fuit, quia intellectum rei quam viderat non accepit. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gregory, *Homiliae in Ezechielem*, 1.1. (PL 76:786): Quia cum ideo prophetia dicta sit quod futura praedicat, quando de praeterito vel praesenti loquitur, rationem sui nominis amittit, quoniam non prodit quod venturum est, sed vel ea memorat quae transacta sunt, vel ea quae sunt. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)