Question: In the Bible, we often come across the phrase “sons of the prophets.” Who exactly were these sons of the prophets? What was their role, and why were they called that? Do such people exist today?

Answer: In the Old Testament, there was indeed a group referred to as the “sons of the prophets.” These appear in several places (see 1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7; 2 Kings 4:1, ESV).

These “sons of the prophets” were prophetic disciples followers who devoted themselves to studying and preserving the prophetic tradition passed down from earlier prophets. They were not necessarily prophets in the full sense but were students or apprentices under the guidance of a senior prophet.

Theological Context: Prophecy in the Old Testament was a divine gift given by the Holy Spirit (see Numbers 11:25, where the Spirit rested on the seventy elders). It was not learned through human training but bestowed sovereignly by God. Visions and dreams were specific charisms (spiritual gifts) given to God’s chosen messengers (Numbers 12:6-8). The “sons of the prophets” were learners of the prophetic legacy, seeking to understand and correctly interpret God’s revelation to avoid false prophecy.

They studied earlier prophetic writings and oracles, such as those of Moses (the Lawgiver and first prophet), Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, to ensure their own prophetic messages aligned with God’s revealed truth.

Purpose of the Sons of the Prophets:
Their role was to confirm and uphold God’s word by cross-checking new revelations with previous prophecies. This was necessary because God’s word is consistent and never contradicts itself (see Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8). A prophet’s message had to agree with the foundational Scriptures and previous true prophecies.

Example from Scripture:
Jeremiah, known as a son of the prophets (Jeremiah 1:4-10), prophesied that Israel would be exiled to Babylon (Jeremiah 25:8-11). He verified his visions by comparing them with earlier prophecies, such as those of Isaiah, who warned of judgment (Isaiah 13:6-13, ESV).

Jeremiah confronted a false prophet, Hananiah, who contradicted God’s word by prophesying peace and the end of exile (Jeremiah 28:1-17, ESV). Jeremiah warned that Hananiah’s words were false

because they opposed the consistent testimony of God’s earlier prophets.

Jeremiah 28:7-8 (ESV):

> “But now hear the word of the Lord, you prophets who prophesy lies in my name: Behold, I did not send you, and you shall not prosper in the matter about which you prophesy. For thus says the Lord: ‘About the prophets who have been before me and before you, who prophesied war, disaster, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms.’”

Jeremiah 28:15-17 (ESV):

> “Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, ‘Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord has not sent you, and you have made this people trust in a lie. Therefore thus says the Lord: Behold, I will cast you off the face of the earth. This year you shall die, because you have taught rebellion against the Lord.’ And the prophet Hananiah died the same year in

> the seventh month.”

Modern Misapplication:
Sadly, the term “sons of the prophets” has been misused today. Some leaders call themselves “chief prophets” and their followers “sons of the prophets,” teaching people techniques to “see visions” or make anointing oil and salt, emphasizing style and ritual over biblical truth. These practices stray from the biblical model where prophecy is a sovereign gift of the Spirit, not a skill to be taught or earned.

Biblical Prophecy Today:
True prophecy today should always align with Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 14:29). Our spiritual “fathers” are not men or church leaders but the biblical prophets and apostles like Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, John, and Paul, who spoke under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:20).

Isaiah’s Prophecy:
Isaiah 13:6 (ESV) declares:
“Wail, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come as destruction from the Almighty.”

This theme of judgment is echoed by Joel and other prophets (Joel 3:14, ESV), showing a consistent prophetic message.

shalom.

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