

SERIES: PROPHETS, PRIESTS AND KINGS

Godly leadership in the house of God and the heart of the believer

TITLE: New Testament Ministry Gift Prophecy

Key Passage: Ephesians 4:11-13

A famous **Henry Ford** quote, “Whether you think you can, or you think you can't – you're right,”

- This emphasizes how much attitude determines success or failure.
- This is true for most projects you take on **and** certainly for technology initiatives.
- ... This is because so much of it is based on attitude.
- It has been seen as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

What we are talking about today is not attitude or aptitude driven.

It is Spirit Given: it is the Gift of Prophecy in the NT and the Church

The NT has many passages that speak of prophecy.

- Mention of NT Prophets by name
- Mention the Ministry or Office of Prophet
- Mention the Motivational Gift of Prophecy
- Mention the Manifestation gift of Prophecy

Illustration

- Annuity Board on investments
 - Must follow biblical truths and not support those investments that are contrary to the work of God.
- Church leadership meeting – Gift offered with ties.
 - Handle with Grace and mercy.... Not rock the boat.
 - Prophetic word – Not of God and no man can run the church by gifts.

The Ministry Gift (Office) of the Prophet

PROPHETS: THEN AND NOW

Luke 16:16

The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. NIV

- and everyone is forcing their way into it.
 - and every man entereth violently into it.
 - and every man presseth into it. KJV
 - and everyone is forcing his way into it. NASB
 - and everyone is pushing to enter it.” Aramaic
 - The word is “into.”

- The Greek word behind it, *eis* (*Strong's* #1519), a common preposition, is indeed frequently translated as "into." However, depending on the context, it can also be translated as "against" or "toward."
 - People are pressing toward it – positive desire (kingdom life)
 - People are fighting against it – finding opposition
 - Either could be viewed
 - Both are correct

QUESTION: DID PROPHECY END?

The idea that prophecy ended with John or ended with the apostles is claimed by some. Yet the Scripture does not allow for that to be true.

- The Law and prophets ended with John the Baptist – That chapter is closed.
- Since then, ... The Gospel is being preached (proclaimed- told forth).

Some would quote the text from 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

⁸But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹²For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. ¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- They will cease.
- We know in part.
- We prophesy in part.
- WHEN – completeness comes!
 - Now we see as though a mirror dimly.
 - THEN – we shall see face to face.
 - NOW I know in part.
 - THEN I shall know fully.

QUESTION: DID PROPHECY END?

ANSWER: IT DID NOT END

THE WORDS OF GOD AND MEN

We see prophets in the New Testament and beyond

The Words of God

- The Apostles – (functional equivalents to OT prophets)
 - Messengers of Christ –
 - John 20:21 – *as the Father sent me... so I send you*
 - Acts 22:21 – *“and He said to me, ‘Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”*
 - 2 Cor. 5:20 - *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

- The apostles’ words are the words of God
 - Gal. 1:11-12 - *the gospel which was preached by me is not of human invention. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.*
 - John 14:26 - *the Helper, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and remind you of all that I said to you.*
 - John 16:13-14 - *But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take from Mine and will disclose it to you.*
 - 2 Peter 3:2 - ² *to remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.*
 - 1 Thessalonians 2:13 - *For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of mere men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which also is at work in you who believe.*
 - 2 Peter 3:15-16 - *Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, ¹⁶ as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which there are some things that are hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.*

The Words of Men

- Prophets of Antioch – Acts 11:27 - *Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.*
- Agabus - Acts 21:28 – *predicts a famine - One of them, named Agabus, stood up and indicated by the Spirit that there would definitely be a severe famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius.*
- Agabus warns Paul about Jerusalem – Acts 21:10 – *10...Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ And he came to us and took Paul’s belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, “This is what the Holy Spirit says: ‘In this way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and hand him over to the Gentiles.’”*
- Paul and Barnabus - given a mission through prophecy – Acts 13:1 - *Now there were prophets and teachers at Antioch.*
- Judas and Silas at Antioch – Acts 15:32 - *Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brothers and sisters with a lengthy message.*
- Prophets predict Paul’s trials – Acts 20:32
- Daughters of Philip – Acts 21:9 - *Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. ⁹ Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.*
- Timothy learns of gifts through prophecy – 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14
- To which **Jerome** (342-420), an early church father responded:

- “This should not exclude the prophets who came after John the Baptist, for we read in the Acts of the Apostles that Agabus and Philip’s four young unmarried daughters uttered prophecies.”
- Thomas Aquinas 1225-1274
 - “...and at all times there have not been lacking persons having the spirit of prophecy, not indeed for the declaration of any new doctrine of faith, but for the direction of human acts.”

We see activity of prophecy within the church.

- IN PART
 - 1 Cor. 13 - ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part...
- LIMITS
 - Paul warns the hearers of the limits of prophetic accuracy and encourages them to “weigh what is said” (1 Cor. 14:29 and to “test all things, holding fast to that which is good.” (1 Thess. 5:19-21).
- TRUTH MIXED WITH ERROR
 - Prophetic utterances contain truth but may be mixed with error. This is often the interpretation of the revelation that the Spirit is giving.
 - They said in Tyre (Acts 21:5) and in Caesarea (Acts 21:5), led by the Spirit “Do Not Go to Jerusalem” to Paul.
 - They understood, by the Spirit what would happen.
 - Then in the flesh interpreted that to dissuade him from going.
 - He went anyway for he had been led to Jerusalem by the Spirit.
 - You have to beware of personal prophesy. Even when given with good intent, it can be wrong.

The Office or Ministry of Prophet in the Church

Ephesians 4:11-13

¹¹So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

1. They are a gift from Christ to the Church.

These 5 are unique – they are governing ministry gifts given to people who are called to ministry leadership within the global and local church.

2. Their job is to build and equip the church for ministry and to maturity.

Their job is to build and equip the church for works of ministry so the church will be mature.

People with these gifts ...

- Love the church
- Are sound in their approach to Biblical Doctrine
- Will work as a team with others

3. They must be discerning.

The NT prophet operates in the God-given special calling and anointing to serve and strengthen the body of Christ by offering messages from God that comfort, encourage, guide, warn, or reveal sin in a way that leads to repentance and spiritual growth.

- Weighed
- Tested
- Judged among the others

4. They can be women.

- A prophetess is not a pastor / not an elder.
- If the Bible is clear about anything it is clear about the fact that prophets operate outside the normal hierarchy of the covenant community. Their job is to speak the Word of God to the people of God with the help of the Holy Spirit of God – and sometimes it is helpful for that voice to come from outside the official structures and offices of the covenant community.

5. They should be recognized within the Church.

People with this gift...

- Are recognized by the church for communicating God's Word through a variety of means.
- Have God-given spiritual vision for the church.
- Share strong biblical convictions to challenge others.
- Are able and willing to apply church discipline and correction for false teaching.
- May have spiritual experiences such as audible voices, angelic visitations, visions, and dreams.
- Will passionately desire others to hear God's Voice and know God's Hear.

CHALLENGE

Acknowledge that God still speaks to HIS people individually but also through gifted people within the church.

Prayerfully identify people within the Body who may be gifted in this way: this may be you.

Test and weigh words of those with the gift to the measure of what God is saying.