

The Story of the Spirit of Prophecy

Understanding God's Special Gift: 01

"The Gift of Prophecy"

In the beginning the angels of God sang together and rejoiced and all the universe were joyful as they saw the work of God in the creation of this earth and the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. Communication between the couple on earth and heavenly beings was a fact of their lives. Adam and Eve had the joy of talking face to face with their Maker. The inspired word pictures them strolling together in the cool of the evening through this perfect world, in fond conversation as family members do. The angels enjoyed visiting and sharing information with the holy pair.

Then came the day when all this changed; angels cast down their musical instruments and stopped singing, great sorrow filled the universe as the news came that the newly created pair in Eden had fallen for the lies of the serpent and joined in Lucifer's rebellion against their Heavenly Father.

The Bible in Genesis 3:8 gives a sad scene; here is the Creator walking in the Garden as previously but there is no sign of Adam and Eve. Instead of running joyfully to meet Him, they are hiding. "Where are you"? He calls, and finally they come out, "We heard Your voice and we were afraid."

Once Adam and Eve chose to rebel and disobey, no longer was it possible for them to be in direct communication with heaven. Sin abruptly ended that privilege.

Now it is most interesting to consider this situation; here these two people who had been given everything even life itself from God and been treated with the utmost love and kindness, had chosen to turn against Him and join with His enemy, the great rebel leader Lucifer, now known as Satan. The universe looked on to see what was going to happen now!

It would not have been surprising had God taken this planet and pushed it over into some secluded area of the universe, put some kind of a force field around it so nothing could come or go from there and just leave it to go the way the inhabitants, both men and fallen angels, had chosen to go. Eventually they would have all been wiped out by sin and selfishness and that would be the end of it. But God was not like that, God loved and the Creator cared, and that made all the difference. There was no easy way out of this problem for God, it was going to cost the greatest price that heaven could possibly give, all because of love. Now as the Creator spoke for the last time face to face with Adam and Eve He promised them a Saviour (Genesis 3:15) and a way out from the consequences that they had chosen.

After Adam and Eve sinned, they could no longer commune with God face to face, so how were they now going to be informed of God's plans for them and learn His will? This was a problem they could not resolve; but God chose to go about instructing mankind by giving them inspired messages through angel messengers who would carry them to certain inspired prophets that He Himself would choose as the need arose. Examples of some of these are Moses, Daniel, Amos, and the Apostles.

This special guidance is called "the gift of prophecy," "prophetic guidance" or the "Spirit of Prophecy". In this lesson, we will examine this important gift of God to man, through which He seeks to lead all men to eternal life. The gift of prophecy is a blessing from God to mankind, and it will remain in the church until the final unifying of the faith.

Being a Prophet is not a career that any human being can choose for themselves. We might choose to be a teacher or a preacher or many other things but true prophets are always and only chosen by God Himself and in fact sometimes they are not all that eager to take the job! We see that Moses, Jeremiah, and Jonah are examples of folk who resisted the idea of standing as a mouth-piece for God to His

people. Let's see what the Bible can tell us about this prophetic gift.

"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 fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13:

Paul compares the church to the body with various parts performing their part in harmony.

"Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. . Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. . For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit, To another prophecy. . But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. . For the body is not one member, but many. . And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers:"
1 Corinthians 12:1-17, 28:

The prophets are the eyes of this spiritual body.

"Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet (speaker for God) was beforetime called a Seer" [see-er for God] 1 Samuel 9:9:

Will there be prophets in the last days? The apostle Peter predicted that there would be prophets in the last days.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy:" Acts 2:17-18:

The above statement by Peter is based on a prediction in the Old Testament by Joel:

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:" Joel 2:28.

The warning that Christ gave against false prophets indicates that there will also be true ones. As in all gifts of God, Satan will use counterfeits to divert attention from the genuine.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Matthew 7:15.



God's law and God's prophets tend to be found together. If His people do not obey His law, then they will not have the guidance of His prophet.

"The law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from the Lord," Lamentations 2:9:

"Then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients." Ezekiel 7:26.

"Thus saith the Lord: If ye will not hearken to Me, to walk in My law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of My servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, both rising up early, and sending them, but ye have not hearkened; Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make of this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." Jeremiah 26:4-6.

"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he." Proverbs 29:18.

The true church, just before Jesus returns, will again have the gift of prophecy, because it keeps the whole law of God by faith in Christ,

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17.

"For the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy." Revelation 19:10.

Just before Christ's return, His true people will again be obeying His moral law through His empowering grace.

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 14:12.

How does prophecy come to us? It comes to us from God through His prophets.

"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 1:21.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw." Revelation 1:1-2.

What are the marks of a true prophet? A true prophet will speak in harmony with the Bible.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word., it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20.

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." Deuteronomy 13:1-3.

Notice that just because someone professes to be a prophet and make predictions and they come true, this does not automatically mean they are from God and that they as a true prophet! If they downplay or ignore any part of the Word of God, they are not from God no matter how many true predictions they may come up with.

A true prophet will exalt God and Christ rather than himself.

"Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou earnest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the

nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth." Jeremiah 1:4-9.

Jeremiah was one of our reluctant prophets.

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5.

A true prophet will reprove men of sin.

"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at My mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if you warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezekiel 3:17-19.

A true prophet will emphasize the necessity of Jesus in the heart.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." 1 John 4:1-3.

A true prophet will live a godly life and their messages will produce good fruit.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:15-18, 20.

The predictions of a true prophet will come to pass.

"And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." Deuteronomy 18:21-22.

"The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him." Jeremiah 28:9.

A true prophet will have visions and dreams.

"And he said, Hear now My words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream." Numbers 12:6.

Both men and women can be called as prophets of God.

Examples of men who were called to be prophets: Enoch ("And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints," Jude 1:14), Moses ("Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen

the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Exodus 3:9, 10), Elijah ("And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. 2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan." 1 Kings 17:1-3), John the Baptist ("But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:13-17), John the Revelator ("I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet," Revelation 1:10).

Examples of women who were called to be prophets: Miriam ("And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." Exodus 15:20), Deborah ("And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time." Judges 4:4), Huldah ("So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her." 2 Kings 22:14), Anna ("And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;" Luke 2.36), Philip's daughters ("And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." Acts 21:9).

The weakest of the weak may be called to this work.

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; That no flesh should glory in His presence." 1 Corinthians 1:27-29.

"And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (also 13:4). 2 Corinthians 12:9.

What are the tests of a true prophet? We are commanded not to despise prophets, but to test them.

"Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21.

"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.

We must test them by the Word of God.

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word. it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8:20:

While in vision, a prophet has no breath, and his natural strength is gone until the angel strengthens him.

"As for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me." Daniel 10:17-18.

While in Vision, a prophet can nevertheless speak.

"And when he [the angel] had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb [unable to speak]. And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake." Daniel 10:15-16:

While in vision, a prophet keeps his eyes open.

"He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open." Numbers 24:16.

While in vision, a prophet is unconscious of his surroundings.

"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. . How that He was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4.

How does the gift of prophecy help us? The abiding gift of prophecy provides counsel and guidance before a crisis.

Noah, was sent with warnings before the Flood came ("And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." Genesis 6:13). Moses was sent to lead the people of God out of Egypt ("Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Exodus 3:9, 10.). Elijah called men back to obedience to God and warned of judgments because they refused to render obedience ("And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. 22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men." 1 Kings 18:21, 22 ;). John the Baptist called all men to repentance and announced the soon coming of Christ ("As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Mark 1:2-4;).

The messages of the prophet bring comfort and encouragement to the people of God.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed. as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19:

"He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort." 1 Corinthians 14:3:

It is only as the people heed the words that God sends them through the prophet that they can have truest success.

"Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chronicles 20:20:

The counsel of the true prophet protects from unbiblical errors and enables the people of God to obey His Written Word.

"And He gave. . prophets. . 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. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Ephesians 4:11-16:

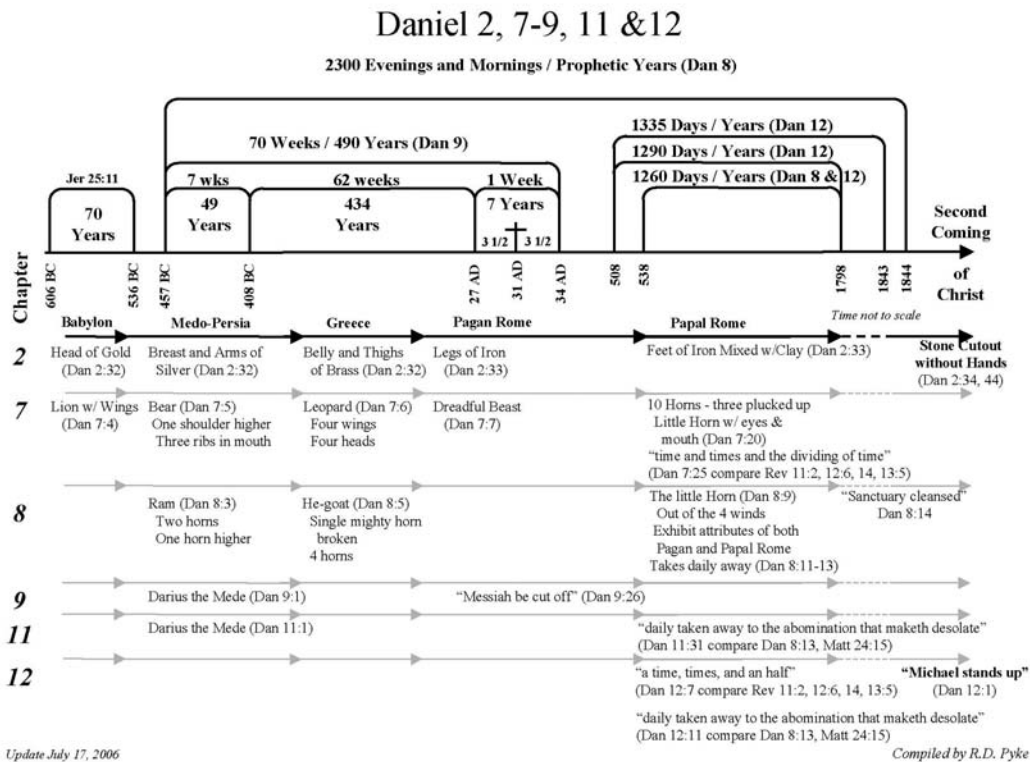
We may expect the prophetic gift among the remnant of the true church, down in the time of the end:

"And the dragon [Satan, through his own agencies] was wroth with the woman [the true church], and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17.

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10:

Now in none of the cases we have looked at did some person just decide one day that they were a prophet and start telling people what to do. They were all chosen of God; in fact with some of the prophets we just looked at their coming was foretold hundreds of years before by certain Time Prophecies. In our day and age it seems that people tend to disbelieve the idea of God sending a Prophet with a message, and yet on the other hand they will rush to someone who claims to be able to tell their future by tea-leaves in a cup or how a deck of cards happens to shuffle and they will believe such utter superstition; but that the Great God of heaven guides His people – oh no, that is crazy and fanatical. The person was just making it up to fool people.

Also today we are faced with people who claim that all the dusty old writings from the past that certain religions have are on the same level of credibility as the Bible; people who take this attitude sadly are grossly ignorant of the Bible because it alone actually contains within itself proof that its source is above and beyond anything human. No other ancient manuscripts even suggest that! Take a look:



Remember these Bible time prophecies were given many years, even centuries before the events and yet they were fulfilled perfectly. Suppose I claim I can tell your fortune; I tell you that sometime in the

future you or some member of your family will take a long trip. OK, sounds good, but there is nothing amazing about that because such an event is to be expected in almost any family. BUT if I tell you what day you will go, where you will go and what you will do there and what day you will return; that is a different story.

These Bible Prophecies give precise details that no human being could possibly lay out. What about Satan, does he know the future? No, he does not; however he knows many facts and a lot about human nature. He watched what your ancestors did and he knows you may likely follow a similar course. He has a system of getting information from all over the world by his fallen angels reporting to him. He also can actually cause certain things to happen that would fulfil his predictions; if he says a plane will crash, unless God prevents him from doing it, he can crash that plane! Mostly though, God does restrict his attacks.

Did you know that what understanding Satan has about the future—not what he tells people, but what he knows himself—he gets from studying the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Oh yes! In the beginning he heard God's promise to Adam and Eve and he knew something was going to happen to interfere with his plans to rule this earth totally. Then when the sacrificial service was given he studied that and learned that someone was going to come to pay the penalty of man's transgression and give a chance of redemption. When the sanctuary was built and all the special feasts and ceremonies given to the people then he studied that and learned much that way.

He was on the scene when time prophecies were given and as he calculated when they were to be fulfilled he tried extra hard to get the people into such a state of unbelief and sin hoping that he could prevent them from happening on schedule. He did not succeed in this but he was able to get many people to be lost because they fell for his lies and refused to believe the real fulfilment was happening right in front of them.

When Noah preached, Satan influenced unbelief and when Moses came to lead Israel out of Egypt he got many to doubt and reject Moses. When Jesus came on time and began His ministry at the start of the 70th week fulfilling all the hundreds of prophetic markers for the Messiah, he was able to get God's professed people to reject and actually kill their own Messiah! But even that was foretold and only added weight to the evidence that Jesus was what He claimed to be.

We don't have time here to go over all the items of time prophecy you can see on our little chart here, but notice the items that end on 1798 and 1844. There is also another time-line ending on these two dates as well, the two lines of 2520 which are not pictured here, one ends 1798 and the other on 1844. So when Satan saw these long time-line prophecies being fulfilled he knew that after 1798 there were many changes that were going to take place and God had plans to raise up a remnant people during the years between 1798 and 1844. So as always he set himself to do all in his power to get people not to recognize these happenings and not to want to be part of those the Lord was gathering in.

In the accounts written by Roger Morneau and confirmed by the Spirit of Prophecy we learn that Satan called a great planning session among his leading devils to try and interfere with all of God's plans. One of the several things he did was to raise up as many counterfeit prophets and religious movement as he could right around these time because he knew that as these great time-prophecies ended God would raise up a true prophet and he desperately wanted to make sure that most people would reject that prophet. Once Sister Ellen had actually received her first vision it is interesting to note Satan began to raise up several women in the occult realms all claiming special insight as prophetesses. We will learn more as we continue these lessons.