



## Prophecy, Spiritual Gift

The temporary spiritual gift of prophecy enabled the possessor of the gift to foretell events pertaining to the Church Age not in the written Canon of Scripture at the time that the gift of prophecy was given. Such prophecies included the Rapture, the Tribulation, the Second Advent, the Millennium and eternity. Although there was mention of the Second Advent, the Tribulation and the Eternal State in the Old Testament, there was information given to New Testament prophets not yet in the Canon of Scripture. That information was given under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and was included in the New Testament Canon.

This was a temporary spiritual gift. The gift of prophecy faded out of existence. The partial, in the Pre-canon period, were the temporary spiritual gifts including prophecy, which would be done away with once the written Canon of Scripture (the perfect) was completed and circulated in 96-100 A.D. 1 Cor. 13:8-10.

*"Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away." (1 Corinthians 13:8-10, NASB)*

The gift of prophecy included foretelling, which was predicting future events as well as forthtelling, which is simply giving the message from the Lord. The forthtelling component of the gift of prophecy is necessary at all times and is still in operation today. The minister of the local church, who is the pastor-teacher, forthtells the message from the Word of God. It applies to anyone who is giving forth a message from the Lord. For instance, whenever you give the Gospel, you are forthtelling. Forthtelling is having divine viewpoint from the Word of God in your soul and sharing it with someone else. When you give forth a message or a viewpoint or a principle from the Word of God, you are forthtelling.

Many of the Old Testament prophets were national leaders, such as Elijah and Isaiah, and were the final authorities on Bible doctrine. The temporary spiritual gift of prophecy for the Church Age was not related to national leadership and functioned only within the Church. To be a prophet in Old Testament times, they received prophetic information from the Lord as well as contemporary information. They received information that they were to communicate to their contemporaries as messages from God. Once they preached it, they reduced it to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Old Testament prophets both foretold and forthtold.

### The Message of the Gift of Prophecy

The gift of prophecy in the early Church usually included either a message of divine guidance, a warning of judgment, or a prediction about the immediate future. Agabus the prophet predicted the near-future famine and economic depression in Acts 11:28-30. In Acts 21:10-12, he warned Paul not to go back to Jerusalem. Other men with the temporary gift of prophecy included Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Paul. Acts 13:1.

*"One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders." (Acts 11:28-30, NASB)*



*"As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he 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 at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem." (Acts 21:10-12, NASB)*

*"Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul." (Acts 13:1, NASB)*

In exercising the temporary spiritual gift of prophecy, the prophet either received his message directly from God or he declared God's will to someone in terms of prophecy of future events. The prophecy was doctrinally accurate. Because of the tremendous amount of eschatology in the New Testament epistles, the writers, who were apostles, also had the gift of prophecy. The gift of prophecy warned about judgment of sin, indicated the will of God regarding current events, and predicted future events during the Apostolic Age. However, the gift did not extend into the Post-canon period because of the doctrine of historical trends. The doctrine of historical trends means that even though history is the record of man's thoughts, decisions, actions and motivations, it is Jesus Christ who controls history. As goes the believer, so goes the historical trends at any point in any generation of the Church Age.

Believers are not only the products of their own decisions, but the nation in which they reside is affected by their good or bad decisions. The pattern of historical adherence to the rule of law and the Laws of Divine Establishment and spiritual growth of the believers within that nation results in prosperity. The pattern of historical disaster from a nation's collective rejection of the Word of God begins with economic depression, moves to moral and immoral degeneracy, and ends in economic and military disaster. Every function of the gift of prophecy during the Pre-canon period is fulfilled by the doctrine of historical trends during the Post-canon period.

### **Men with the Gift of Prophecy**

The men with the gift of prophecy depended on their knowledge of the Old Testament, but most importantly, they would receive new information under the inspiration ministry of God the Holy Spirit. If they happened to have the gift of apostleship, much of this information was already put into the New Testament. The Apostle Paul had the gift of prophecy. He used it in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 when he was speaking of the Rapture of the Church. He used it in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8 when he spoke about the Tribulation period and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. These are all future events, or eschatology which means the last or final things.

*"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, NASB)*

*"Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of*



### *His coming;" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-8, NASB)*

The Apostle John also had the gift of prophecy. He talked about the personal antichrist as he would exist throughout the Church Age in 1 John 2:22 and 2 John 1:7. He spoke about the spirit of antichrist in 1 John 4:3 and the eschatological or future antichrist who will be the Jewish dictator of Palestine during the Tribulation. He also wrote about everything from the trends of the Church Age, throughout the Church Age, and right down to the Rapture. He included the Tribulation, the Second Coming, the Millennium, the Great White Throne Judgment and the Eternal State, all of which is contained in the Book of the Revelation.

*"Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son." (1 John 2:22, NASB)*

*"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist." (2 John 1:7, NASB)*

*"and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world." (1 John 4:3, NASB)*

The completion of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ completed the Canon of Scripture or the Bible as we know it. John used his gift of prophecy in writing this last book of the Bible. John and Paul had the gift of prophecy. This gift related the plan of God to time, future time, and the foretelling of future events. So, upon the completion of Scripture, prophecy was no longer necessary. All prophecy is now in the Bible.

### **Prophecy Versus Predictions**

You might ask about Nostradamus and all the predictions he made. They were very abstruse and nebulous. At one time he predicted that "a city in the west will perish in an earthquake." Everyone thought that he must have meant Los Angeles and that it's going to be wiped out someday. This is assuming a bit too much because when Nostradamus lived, there were hundreds of cities to the west of him. It could be any city such as Paris or London. It was simply a satanic ploy and a counterfeit prophecy. True biblical prophecies were fulfilled exactly as they were predicted in the Bible in complete detail. Hundreds of them having been fulfilled in human history. You cannot say that about some vague or abstruse predictions that you may make. Predictions have several different interpretations by many different people at many different times.

When the Bible predicted the destruction of the city of Babylon, it took place exactly as predicted. All of the prophecies fulfilled in the first coming of Christ were fulfilled in that minutia of detail. They were fulfilled in such a way that absolutely defied all the laws of probability. They could not have occurred simply by chance. That is why we believe the Bible is the revealed and inerrant Word of God. You should listen up, pay attention, and believe it. You should believe it when it says in Acts 16:31 that if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will have an eternal relationship with Him. The Bible tells each of us that we will have the wonderful possibility of a life of great meaning and purpose and definition. This potential becomes reality as you grow up spiritually under the power of the Spirit and the power of the Word of God.

*"They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."" (Acts 16:31, NASB)*

That's how Jesus Christ becomes number one in your life. That's how you fulfill your destiny within the plan of God. There is no other way. The Word of God is the greatest miracle we have and five words



from the Bible are more important than 10,000 words spoken in different tongues or languages. 1 Cor. 14:19-20.

*"however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature." (1 Corinthians 14:19-20, NASB)*

The Bible is our great miracle. It's an absolute tragedy that so many have such an abysmal ignorance of the Word of God - especially among believers today. If you are growing spiritually, you should continue in your intake of the Word and you should share it with those near you. You should look for opportunities to relate it and communicate it to other people in a conversational way. Today, all prophecy is contained in the completed Canon of Scripture - the Word of God. We no longer need the gift of prophecy.