

Prophets Prophecy And the Prophetic

WHAT CHRISTIAN LEADERS ARE SAYING

Harald Bredesen a Founding Board member of CBN & 700 club.
Shaun Kearney does not have to go back to the original source he walks with Him. He is his confidante. He's one of the most original men I have ever known. If you want to get blessed Shaun Kearney is your man.

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Shaun Kearney is a seasoned minister with a rare spiritual depth and gifting. The Lord has linked his years of experience with a deep passion to equip God's people to minister in the supernatural. His seminar brought our church to exciting new levels of sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and how He empowers us to minister to others.

David Schoch Founder Bethany Chapel Long Beach California.
Shaun Kearney is a man of God with high integrity. His ability to communicate and impart the Word of God has earned him a reputation as a fine speaker. He has a true gift in ministering in the prophetic and I highly recommend him to your church.

MINISTRY PROFILE OF SHAUN T KEARNEY

After ministering extensively throughout Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and North America during 1967 the Lord led the Kearney's and their five children, (four sons and one daughter) to Auckland, the largest city in New Zealand. There they began to pioneer a church that was to have a significant impact on the whole church nationally and the community at large. In 1972 this growing body of believers known as "New Life Fellowship" miraculously acquired a tract of land where a Convention Centre and facilities for a Bible College and Christian Campground were established.

This beautiful location with its own private beach became the scene of many wonderful events accomplished by God. It was the venue for many conferences sponsored by the church for Christian leaders. Speakers from many parts of the world came there to minister to God's servants as they gathered from all over New Zealand, Australia, and as far away as India, South East Asia and the South Pacific. Ministers of every mainline denomination attended these.

During Brother Kearney's six-year tenure as chairman of the Pentecostal Ministers' Fraternal in Auckland, a milestone was achieved. For the first time in the history of the Pentecostal movement, a conference for all the streams of Pentecost, both classical and independent, was held at the church's convention centre. Accepting an invitation from Brother Kearney Jack Hayford Pastor of "Church on the Way" came as the guest speaker. All the leaders in the nation, without exception attended. As they lived together for five glorious days, the Spirit of God broke down barriers, allayed suspicions, thus paving the way for the formation of the Associated Pentecostal Churches of New Zealand.

The Kearney's travelled to the United States for a Sabbatical along with their family. Returning to New Zealand in 1980, they sold all their possessions and went back to the US in 1981. They lived there until they moved to Australia in 1987. Since then Brother Kearney has travelled in Asia, US, Canada, and Europe extensively. In addition he has authored many books on "Kingdom Life".

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INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPHETIC

Some of the things being done in the name of the prophetic are questionable to say the least. The following takes a look at some of the problems associated with the prophetic, and offers some answers in response to the usual questions that arise over the use and abuse of these gifts and ministries. I have tried to make this effort interesting and readable for even the newest believer. I trust that you will find it so.

Anne and I were saved in Australia in 1957. Six months after we came to know the Lord we moved to New Zealand. We soon became involved in a wonderful visitation that would eventually touch the entire world. Over the next few years many well-respected international ministers that came to New Zealand said they sensed that God was doing something unique in our land. Many prophecies were given that said New Zealand would become a launching pad from which many servants would be sent to the nations of the earth. During this time Ern Baxter spent several months in New Zealand believing strongly that something special was happening in the nation.

New Zealand is geographically the most Eastern point on earth from Jerusalem. It is literally the uttermost part of the Earth. Its population is barely four million, and has about the land area as Israel. It seemed to hold a special fascination for many of the Lord's servants in other parts of the world because of its location and size. New Zealand was quite isolated from other countries until the jet age came. This isolation was in many ways a great blessing, for it protected the work of the Lord from some of the excesses experienced in other parts of the Christian world, thus giving it a unique flavour. We were soon to witness a wonderful visitation of God. We're told that hindsight is better than foresight, and that it can also be very enlightening for those who are serious about history. It's been well said that people who don't read history stand in grave danger of repeating it.

1 Corinthians 10:11. “Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

1 Corinthians 10:5-6, 11. “But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now all these things were for our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

As we look to and heed the lessons of the past we shall see that not only have men prophesied, but also people and nations have prophesied in the past, and still do so in the present, and doubtless will continue to do so in the future. Nations, people, places, events, and objects have prophesied down through the centuries.

Matt 11:13. “For all the law and the prophets prophesied until John.” It is stated that not only did the prophets prophecy, but “all the Law” did also. The feasts of Israel, the tabernacle of Moses, the tabernacle of David, the priesthood, the high priests garments, the offerings, all of these events and people have great meaning prophetically, especially for those upon whom the end of the age has come. To better understand the ministry of the prophets, and the prophetic, we must spend time searching through the Old Testament for a sure foundation on which to build. Like every other major truth, the roots of prophecy are found in Genesis. The first prophetic utterance in the word was given by other than God immediately after the fall.

Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Here we have the first and most profound prophecy ever given to man. It is filled with hope. It declares that the seed of the woman, not the seed of man, but a woman shall come and bruise the serpent’s head. Everything from that point in time looked forward in the hope of that event. We on this side of the cross can look back with grateful hearts knowing that He who promised is faithful and true.

MY EARLY DAYS

The Pentecostal movement in New Zealand was very small in 1950. During the late 50's and into the 60's the Holy Spirit commenced to move among the indigenous Maori people. A significant feature of this outpouring was the tremendous number of scriptures put to music began to come forth as the Spirit of God gave them. Many of the souls that were coming to the Lord carried these songs to many parts of the country. Soon God began to move among the population at large and as a result a large number of new churches began to emerge all across the country. They were not of any particular main line Pentecostal denomination; their message was simple, and the meetings were refreshingly free style and manner of worship. The song of the Lord and the voice of the bridegroom was present. The floor was open to any that had something from God to share. Worship leaders were unknown and unnecessary as the praise and worship was quite spontaneous. Spiritual songs and anointed music was the norm, as musicians played as the Holy Spirit moved them. Prophecy played a key role, and excitement ran high. Accompanying this a tremendous hunger for the word of God was evident. All the while more and more people were being saved, or leaving dead and formal religious systems. The ministry of deliverance was openly practiced even though we experienced great opposition particularly from classical Pentecostals. As time went by this antagonism gave way to a new appreciation of what God was doing. Gradually the visitation grew into what later became known as the Charismatic renewal. Many ministers from overseas began to come to see what God was doing.

In 1965 David Schoch founder of "Bethany Chapel" in Long Beach California came to New Zealand to be the guest speaker at a conference in the city of Nelson over Easter. His prophetic ministry was highly regarded worldwide. During these meetings he prophesied that God was going to build again the Tabernacle of David that was fallen down, and raise up the ruins thereof, in order that all men including the gentiles might begin to seek after the Lord. That prophecy was to have profound repercussions internationally.

THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID

Acts 15: 13-18. “And after they had held their peace, James answered saying, Men and Brethren hearken unto me: Simeon hath declared how that God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name sake. And to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written, after this I will return and will build again the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.”

Two months after Brother Schoch’s visit at a ministers conference in the South Island city of Timaru God spoke to us during three days of meetings through His anointed servant and prophet Ron Coady as he took up the theme of the Tabernacle of David which Brother Schoch’s prophecy had drawn his attention too. Brother Coady had been responsible for bringing David Schoch to New Zealand. Six weeks later around fifty ministers from throughout New Zealand gathered in the North Island where Brother Coady again ministered on David’s Tabernacle. To my knowledge it was the first time anywhere in the world the subject of David’s Tabernacle had ever been dealt with in such a thoroughly comprehensive manner. Forty years later I still believe this statement to be true.

In 1967 I was privileged to travel around the world preaching this message of restoration and joy. In every place great freedom in the presence of the Lord was expressed through dancing, the song of the Lord, worship, and prophecy. My travels took me to Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America. During that time I spent several months in the United States, criss-crossing the country with this message of joy and liberty. I am not saying that exuberant joy and worship was unknown until 1965, but what did happen was God had now given us a scriptural foundation for the things that had been happening in our midst. It was now possible to

teach on it from the Word so others could enjoy this wonderful refreshing. As time went by the Holy Spirit began to shed more light on this vital subject from the Word of God for our personal edification.

Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. I'm not a novice when it comes to these things. I have participated in some precious times in the Holy Spirit, and I long once more for the same purity that we experienced in those first expressions of that visitation. I am not advocating that we return to those former days, but I am saying we should not discard what came from the Holy Spirit, but build on it as we move on in God.

Early in our Christian experience Anne and I had the privilege of being led by the Lord to fellowship with a small group of believers who had been profoundly affected by the revival that broke out in Canada in 1948, it was to become known as the "Latter Rain Movement", a name given to it by others. Although it was opposed vehemently by religious systems of the day it eventually affected the church worldwide in a positive way. True there were excesses, just as there are today. There have always been tares among the wheat, bad fish in the net, leaven hidden in the meal and unclean birds in the mustard tree of faith, just as there was a mixed multitude that came out of Egypt. Oh how they wept, longing for the leeks and garlic to the point that they actually wanted to appoint a captain to take them back. There is no going back, but only a going on. "Tell my people that they go forward" was what God told Moses to tell the people. We spent many happy years with these brothers and sisters.

**People who don't stand for something
Usually fall for anything and everything**

Joseph was a fruitful bough planted by a well whose branches ran over the wall. Because of his dreams his brethren hated him and when the opportunity arose they sold him into slavery and told his father wild animals killed him. Yet eventually he who was "separated" from his brothers was to become their saviour. He paid the price for their

eventual blessing. In like manner the branches of the 1948 visitation have run over the wall of many denominations, but they quickly forgot that certain brethren paid a price for blessed truth they soon took for granted. Those who once bitterly opposed the truths of this visitation began to embrace it, yet its roots cannot to be found in their movements. While many who enjoy it have no idea how it got here; where it came from, or anything of the history of those saints who bore the stigma of the message in those early days.

RESTORED TRUTHS

Visitation always brings confrontation and in this current hour it's no different to what it has always been. Luke 5:39 "No man having drunk old wine straight way desires the new, he says the old is better." But the fact of the matter is that he's prejudiced. We all have an inherent resistance to change.

Here is a list of the distinctive truths that were restored to the body of Christ in the 1948 visitation as God spoke through His anointed prophets.

- The sacrifice of praise. Restoration of the lost years.
- Revelation of the body of Christ. Headship of Christ.
- Ministries. Fruit and Gifts of the Spirit.
- Seven principles of the Apostles doctrine Hebrews 6:1-3.
- Laying on of hands.
- Communion.
- Christ in you.
- Sonship.
- John 17: Coming together of the body of Christ.
- Latter Rain outpouring. Prophetic spirit.
- Deliverance ministry.
- Song of the Lord.
- Praise and worship.
- Perfection of the Church.
- Feasts of the Lord. Tabernacle of David.
- Resurrection life.

The Lord will not give further truth until we walk in the light of what we have. The 1948 visitation saw the Holy Spirit coming and breathing life into what had become dead and formal. The truth was in the form, but the form suppressed and stifled it. There is the ever-present danger in our churches of degenerating into form. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power." God initiates, and then man imitates, or tries to suppress it. During the Dark Ages the truth was cast to the ground and ungodliness began to prosper. Then God began to restore truth, a portion at a time.

THE MINISTRY OF THE PROPHETS

Hebrews 1:1-2 Amp. “In many separate revelations, each of which set forth a portion of the truth, and in different ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets.”

Acts 13:27. “For they that dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they fulfilled them in condemning Him.”

Luke 24:27. “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures things concerning himself.”

The ministry of the prophet has almost in every case been one of recovery. It has been to do with restoration. That is, this ministry has to do with the recovering of things that have been lost. It seems that God is not prepared to settle for anything less than all He has planned and paid for, so He sends His people a message in order to draw their full attention to His full purpose for them. This often made them unpopular with the religious leaders and the Kings of Israel. The prophet voices the dissatisfaction of God with “what is”, by calling them to repentance, and a change of heart and attitude, lest He shows His displeasure in judgment.

2 Chronicles 36:14. “Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much, and polluted the house of the Lord which he hallowed in Jerusalem.”

Whenever problems arose that necessitated the intervention of God, He sent a prophet to speak into the situation. Paul tells us in Hebrews to hold fast the manner of kingdom that we have received. It’s a kingdom that cannot be moved by man or institution. Therefore we must serve God with reverence and fear in a manner that is acceptable to Him, “For our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:28-29.

2 Chronicles 36: 15

“And the Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes (that is consistently and considerately,) because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place.” He had compassion not only upon his people but also upon his dwelling place. God loves his house and will not allow it to be polluted.

2 Chronicles 36:16.

“But they mocked the messengers of God and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.”

“Till there was no remedy”; this time they had gone too far what a tragic condition; and so God brings upon them the king of the north. Unlike God who would have shown them compassion, this king showed none. He slew young, old, man and maiden alike. His followers pillaged and plundered remorselessly, destroyed their homes and their entire city. They set about and stripped the Temple of all its golden vessels and burned God's house with fire. Those that escaped the sword he took captive and carried them away to Babylon, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfil the Word of the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths.

“For as long as the land lay desolate it kept Sabbath to fulfil three score and ten years.”

The land had failed to keep its Sabbaths since King Saul the people's choice had come to the throne. It may have taken 490 years of long-suffering on the Lord's part, but although the mills of God grind slow they grind sure. God is not slack concerning His promises as men may think, but every disobedience and transgression that is not confessed will receive its just reward.

**God is tolerant and understanding,
But He is also uncompromising**

2 Corinthians 5:10. “For we all must have our lives laid open before the tribunal of Christ, where each must receive what is due to him for his conduct in the body, good or bad.”

It's foolish to take comfort in such misused quotes such as; “if the Lord should mark iniquity who could stand”, and then just continue in sin as though God will turn a blind eye and everything will be all okay because it won't, for God does mark iniquity. Nobody gets away with anything. The price of unconfessed sin must be paid. It's an irrevocable law. You can pay now with the blood of Christ or pay later with your own. If David didn't get away with sinful disobedience when he numbered Israel; or Moses when he struck the rock in anger, whom do we think we are to tempt God? A case in point is the way that God through Samuel the prophet worked with Saul even though he was not His choice but the peoples'.

1 Samuel 8:5-7. “Then the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel, and said unto him, behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in the ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said; give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: **for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me** that I should not reign over them.”

This committee of elders decided on a course of direct action. They reasoned that Samuel wasn't long for this world and so they had better do something about it. They decided they wanted a king like all the other nations. It has sometimes been referred to as “head and shoulders government” meaning, human wisdom and natural strength. Saul was just that, he was head and shoulders above all the people. The deliverance of the people of Jabesh Gilead exceeded the wildest expectations of the rest of Israel. How thrilled they must have felt, after all he was their man. But it didn't last for very long. Their king proved to be completely unpredictable when it came to carrying out the will of God in even the most trivial of matters.

Samuel begged them not to do this thing,

1 Samuel 8:19. “Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, NO, we want a king over us.” The prophet went and sought the Lord, and under divine orders gave the people what they wanted.

1 Samuel 8:22. “And the Lord said to Samuel, harken to their voice, and give them a king.”

Samuel was extremely patient and charitable for as long as possible in all his dealings with Saul. But eventually the Lord rejected Saul for all his stubbornness, and his wilful rejection of His Word through Samuel. Denominations are man made committees who set themselves up to run things for God. After a short time stagnation sets in, and God has no choice but to move on.

I used to belong to a Body of believers that was fierce in their determination to maintain the autonomy of each local church as indigenous and self-governing. The leadership of each church maintained their links with other fellowships. However they eventually succumbed and voted themselves in a king, who no doubt feels the pressure of having to perform and come up with good ideas for the benefit of the movement. A father begets a family, a family becomes a clan, a clan becomes a tribe, a tribe becomes a denomination, and with unrelenting determination, like termites in a dead log administrators take over. The result is calcification, crystallization and stagnation. Finally it is concrete, and immovable, and so God moves on.

**Like big Government, with high taxation, and
Intrusive interference destroys all personal initiative.**

“We stand in danger of accepting as wisdom what is only knowledge, and for progress what is only change.” *A. Lincoln.*

There can be no progress when the character of things remains the same. True progress dies if character is not changed.

Acts 13:27.

“For they that dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him.”

The prophetic messenger was never popular, but then unpopularity was no proof of him being wrong. For hundreds of years on the Sabbath day, in every synagogue the Scriptures of the prophets were read. Not for just a minute or two, but it continued all day long. You would think that they would be so versed in the prophets they would have recognized the Messiah when He came among them fulfilling the very Scriptures that they read.

Luke 19: 41.

“And when he was come near he beheld the city, and wept over it.”

Luke 19:42. “If you had known, at least in this your day the things that belong to you, but now they are hid from your eyes.”

What day was he talking about? The day of their visitation! Messiah was in their midst but their tradition blinded their eyes. They couldn't accept Him because they were prejudiced. He didn't come the way they wanted Him to.

Luke 19: 43.

“For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast up a bank about you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side.”

And so their destruction is prophesied, because they never knew the day of their visitation.”

John 5:43. “I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.”

The prophets in both testaments had a special function among the God's people. Yet as we look at them that's not all that they were. Many of them combined the prophetic office with other duties.

Exodus 7:1. “And the Lord said unto Moses, see I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy Prophet.” Aaron was a prophet before he was appointed High Priest.

Deuteronomy 34:10. “And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.”

Moses was a prophetic leader. Many of the prophets seemed to keep a low profile, and were rarely seen except when they were on a mission for God, while others like David, whose prophecies fill even more pages than some of the Major Prophets, had other responsibilities. i.e., David being a king as well as a prophet.

Samuel the last and the greatest of the judges was also a mighty prophet. The prophet Amos is referred to as the herdsman of Tekoa. Of all the writing prophets, he is the only one referred to as holding down a secular position. He was a shepherd, and a gatherer of fruit. Saul was counted among the prophets.

Now let's go to the New Testament: When Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost it was in the capacity of a prophet that he functioned. And when he stood he was not alone, for the eleven stood beside him. Paul was prophetic in addition to being an apostle, a teacher, a shepherd and an evangelist. It is my firm conviction that all the apostles were capable of moving in every ascension gift.

In Acts 15: 13-15. After Paul and Barnabas reported how God had confirmed His word through them among the gentiles, James argues, “that to this agree the words of the prophets.” Peter supported this position also. This historic incident in the church in Jerusalem settled once and for all their position on the gentile question, accepting as their authority the prophet Amos. Here is James seen moving in prophetic anointing for spiritual interpretation.

A MINISTRY OF SHAME

Honest people recognize that all is not well in the body of Christ today. It is obvious to them that we need ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to us in this critical hour. However we do not need the kind of thing that has been taking place under the ministry of some modern self-anointed and self-appointed prophets.

2 Corinthians 4:1-2, 5. “Therefore seeing we have received this ministry, as we have received mercy we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; But by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

Hidden things, and shameful things that the men who commit them would not like to be made known. The false teachers at Corinth were **dishonest**.

Walking in craftiness.

Gr Panourgia; also in Ephesians 4:14. To use unholy methods among holy things; Handling the word of God **deceitfully**, Gr Doloo; to disguise oneself; to beguile, to ensnare, to contaminate, to adulterate and counterfeit. The false teachers at Corinth were clever and cunning. They would stop at nothing to further their own ends.

2 Corinthians 4:5. “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus sake.”

There's an unhealthy preoccupation with the ministry of the prophet in some quarters today. Because of their high profile, they are keenly sort after, and extremely popular. Rarely do they have any resemblance to the prophets of scripture, in either the old or new testaments. It has been sad to see some of the unethical things that I am personally aware of being done in the realm of the prophetic by unscrupulous men.

In Asia recently at a conference being conducted for national Pastors and leaders we were approached about a practice they

called 'Incubation'. It appeared that certain prophets from South East Asia, the USA, with some local men were enrolling people they claimed the Lord had revealed to them who had a prophetic calling upon their lives. For the sum of 7000 Pesos, US\$140, (a considerable sum of money in that part of the world) couples were being incubated over several days to become prophets. I spoke personally to some national pastors who had been incubated, they told me they had been instructed not to discuss what they had been taught, because the likes of myself wouldn't understand. They were told to maintain a low profile because eventually God would vindicate them. In due time we would all have to come and acknowledge this anointing resting on them. This is nothing other than the doctrine of the Nicoaitans which thing God hates, and condemned. Yes He said He hates it. It is akin to the spirit of Balaam, who among other things prophesied for money. As I write I am personally aware of a number of Christians who travelled to South East Asia from Australia to be incubated. The cost for travel and ministry received ran into thousands of dollars. Eventually the people running the conferences took the next step and proclaimed that they become Apostles. No doubt they felt they had to keep one jump ahead of their young prophets.

An incident that took place after the healing of Naaman is found in 2 Kings 5:20-27. Naaman offered and begged Elisha to take a gift for his healing, but the prophet blessed Naaman and sent him away in peace refusing to take one thing for **what God had done**.

“But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha said, behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but as the Lord lives, I will run after him, and take somewhat from him.”

Vs 21. “Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him he alighted down from the chariot to meet him saying, Is all well?”

Naaman had gone only a short distance when Elisha's servant Gehazi went after him to try and get something for himself. He lied to Naaman, saying Elisha had changed his mind and wanted two talents

of silver as well as two changes of raiment for two sons of the prophets who had just come to him. All told this amounted to a very large sum of money. Naaman responded and begged Gehazi to take the gifts for his healing, which Elisha earlier had refused to take for **what God had done.**

2 Kings 5:23-24. “Naaman said, take two talents, and he urged him, (not that Gehazi took much urging) and bound two talents of silver in two bags with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants and they bare them before him.”
And Gehazi took the two talents of silver and the two changes of clothing from the servants of Naaman and hid them in a tower. It was never his intention that anyone but himself should have them.

2 Kings 5:25. “He went in and stood before his master and Elisha said to him, whence comest thou Gehazi? And he answered, thy servant went nowhere.”
After he had hidden his ill-gotten gains, he went back to Elisha, and when the prophet asked him where had he been Gehazi answered that he hadn’t been anywhere in particular. Then Elisha said to him,

2 Kings 5:26-27. “Went not my heart with thee, when Naaman turned from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.”

Elisha made it clear his heart had gone with him when he chased after Naaman to seek a reward for what God had done. Rebuking him Elisha announced that the leprosy of Naaman would cleave to Gehazi and his seed forever. It appears from what Elisha said, that Gehazi’s intention was to buy vineyards, olive plantations, sheep, oxen and servants for himself. The consequences of making merchandise of the Lord’s gifting are severe in the extreme. This incident shows how seriously God viewed this matter. And how far reaching sin is, for the wages of Gehazi’s sin went far beyond himself to affect his entire family.

THE MINISTRY OF CORRECTION

2 Corinthians 12:20a. “For I fear that perhaps I may come and find you not what I wish, and that you may find me not what you wish.” As long as Paul knew he was in right standing with God he didn't care too much about what others thought of him. In fact he was just the opposite. Because of his love for the body of Christ, and his concern for the testimony of the Lord, he would not sweep anything under the carpet. He was never guilty of compromising to win the approval of men. Paul's supreme aim was to stand on the Lord's side come what may, regardless of what men thought or said.

On an occasion in which Abraham Lincoln had made an important decision one of his staff said, “Well Mr. President, I hope that God is on our side”, to which Lincoln replied, “What I am worried about sir, is not if God is on our side, but are we on God's side?”

Unpopularity is no proof of being wrong

It is well to note that Paul was not just an apostle, but also a prophet of God in his own right. A careful study will show that he operated in every gift. Paul does not want to have to take stern measures with the Corinthians but if necessary he will. And so he begins to list all the things that are going on in the midst in this, his second epistle. After all that had taken place as recorded in his first letter, the same things have raised their ugly heads again. Quarrelling, jealousy, fornication, slander, gossip, conceit and disorder are rife. It sounds like just about any local so-called spirit filled congregation today. Charismatic privilege brings with it charismatic responsibility.

There's never been a more urgent need for Prophetic in sight than the hour in which we live

The epistles to the Corinthians could just as well have been written to any congregation in western society today and hit the mark. The Corinthian epistles are often referred to as the charismatic epistles.

THE MINISTRY OF THE PROPHETIC

Acts 13:27. “They that dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they fulfilled them in condemning Him.”

Consider carefully the ministry of the prophetic. When many of us think of the prophetic we immediately think of someone who predicts events, times, dates, names, and cataclysmic events such as earthquakes. We seem to have had our fair share of forecasts in recent times. In fact they are becoming more common. Some claims are quite preposterous and yet they still seem to attract great attention and endless debate from people who ought to know better.

The false prophets in Israel came out of the school of the prophets. 1 Kings 22:22-23.

Not long ago a video was doing the rounds in relation to an earthquake that was to take place in the Mississippi basin. The quake was not forthcoming but a devastating flood did. A group of Christians in 1984 seeking a place to hide from impending doom that was about to come on the inhabitants of the world, went to the Falkland Islands to escape. Their leaders assured them that this was the safest place on earth. The rest is history. Within six months of their arrival war broke out between Argentina and Britain, and a bloody conflict ensued. The Y2K fiasco was another false alarm.

Jesus prayed to His Father in John 17:15. “Not that thou should take them out of the world, but that thou should keep them from the evil.” Then in June 1994 an event was going to take place that would have tremendous spiritual impact upon the church. On this particular day unrighteousness was going to be ‘ripped out of the earth.’ When it never took place, no apology was forthcoming, but lame excuses of the most ridiculous kind were offered. One being that an earthquake that occurred 400 miles underground in South

America could be an explanation. These things don't help our cause especially when they are given wide coverage in the media.

Matthew 24:7. “And there shall be famines.”

Jesus foretold that a sign of the end times would be famines. Famines were usually a judgment of God. There are thirteen of them mentioned throughout scripture.

Acts 11:27-28. “And in these days came prophets unto Jerusalem from Antioch, And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world, which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.”

Romans 8:35. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine?”

It is plain to see that God showed Agabus what was about to happen, and it's also clear that we have the promise of His loving provision even in the midst of famine. While its true that we all want to be available to God, but we should also be wary and not be gullible either. The devil is continually attempting to push someone too far when they try to promote their ministry. We must be continually examining our motives.

The prophetic ministry is not just predictive. This type of approach to the prophetic is too restrictive it's much larger than that. It goes beyond dates, times and incidents. True that's one aspect of the prophetic, but only one, because that which is truly prophetic has more in mind than just events.

Acts 2:12. “And they were all amazed, and were in doubt saying one to another, what does this mean?”

The prophetic ministry is more precise than just predictive. Its greatest asset is one of spiritual interpretation. This operation is for bringing spiritual implications of things past, present, and future before God's people with understanding and application. Because

of this, it's invaluable and absolutely essential to the spiritual well being of God's people.

When Peter stood on the day of Pentecost he was under a tremendous prophetic anointing. Read it and see what he said in his most astonishing explanation. It was all the more amazing because of who he was, and what he had done in those dark days between the garden and the tomb. Now he stands before the mystified multitude to explain exactly what it was that they were witnessing. Peter tells those gathered that what was taking place was what the prophet Joel had prophesied 800 years earlier.

He brings the past into the present, **Acts 2:16**. **“This is that.”** And then goes further,

Acts 2:17. “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.”

Peter's interpretation was not only for the present, but pointed to a future, which would now be all inclusive. It encompassed men and women, sons, daughters, slaves, and Gentiles as well as Jews. This is for all flesh! How did this uneducated fisherman know this? By the anointing, which he, like the 120, had received, which heralded the advent of the Holy Spirit into the affairs of God's people? Oh how we need the anointing for prophetic insight into what we should be doing at every level of our lives. This is available to every member of the body of Christ today. We have one who dwells within us whom Jesus promised would lead us guide us into all truth.. We can have Him exactly the same way they received Him, by waiting on Him in His presence. If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracle of God, let him speak with the ability that God gives. In other words, if God has spoken to you, speak up. If He hasn't, then shut up and wait until He does.

THE INFLUENCE OF O.T. PROPHETS IN THE NEW

I once believed the role of prophet was not that important in the New Testament? Firstly I couldn't find many of them, and secondly, those that were living in apostolic times apart from a couple of occasions never seemed to contribute anything very significant. I now realize that my view was too limited and that perhaps I was looking at the wrong prophets, or looking for prophets in the wrong place. It is a fact of great importance that we recognize the place the Old Testament prophets have in the New Testament. In addition let us never forget the role of the Holy Spirit, the prophet who lives within each member of His body.

Romans 16:25-26.

“Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, **but now is made manifest**, and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.”

“Is now disclosed, made known through the prophetic writings (scriptures) of the prophets.” The entire gospel is stands on the prophetic scriptures as revealed by Christ Himself and the apostles. The gospels are continually pointing to the Major Prophets for their authority. The statement “that it might be fulfilled by the word of the prophet” appears frequently.

From the birth of Christ right throughout His life we find the gospel writers calling upon, and quoting from, one prophet after another. They focus upon the life of Christ from His birth, to His passion, death, and resurrection. Then as we move on to the Acts of the Apostles, and into the Epistles, we find reference after reference being made to the scriptures of the Minor Prophets. It's an impressive list. No wonder the scripture says that we are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

1 Corinthians 12:28a.

“God has set some in the Body first apostles, secondarily prophets.”

Apostles are first because they are the infallible interpreters of the Old Testament prophets.

It’s most enlightening and quite important to see how often Jesus quoted from the prophets. When confronted by Satan in the wilderness He spoke the word of the prophets, and later, in His many exchanges with the Pharisees, He did the same.

Throughout His life He quoted Old Testament prophecies. Sometimes not only were the words of men used, but shadows and types also; such as Jonah in the whale's belly; and “as in the days of Noah.” This phrase; “as the scripture hath said” is repeated again and again.

Luke 24:25, 27. “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Acts 13:27. “For the dwellers at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they fulfilled them in condemning Him.”

The Pharisees and the other leaders knew the scriptures of the prophets, but couldn't hear their voices. They couldn't hear because their tradition made them dull of hearing. They could quote the scriptures and in many cases had committed the whole Torah to memory. But they never recognized Him, although He came fulfilling the very scriptures that they read every Sabbath. Hearing, yet they never heard the voices of the prophets.

Big things hinge upon hearing the voice of the Bridegroom.

And great things will be accomplished when we obey it.

THE MAKING OF A PROPHET

A prophet was a man who came from God, and went back to God, over and over again. When he spoke it was because he had been with God, and thus had heard from God.

Many times as I have travelled over the years, pastors and ministers have come to me and ask me to prophesy. I know that their motives are quite pure, (Pastors are always wanting to bless their people), but they don't understand the prophetic ministry. This ministry is not an office that functions on request, or because of the expectations of people and pastors. It puts pressure on the servant of God to perform, and that's wrong. There is nothing professional about this position. I have seen brochures advertising prophetic conferences where those who pay their fees up front to attend the whole conference are promised that they will receive a personal prophecy from the prophet.

The Prophetic is a ministry of revelation and not request

When it becomes professional it becomes cheapened and dangerous. It happened in the schools of the prophets set up by Samuel. We must never confuse the true prophetic office with what the purposes of these schools were for. No theological school can ever make a prophet. Whenever the human element comes it becomes contaminated with sin. It's a ministry of revelation, something new, and fresh. It may be old truth, but now it's seen in a fresh light.

All those liars that prophesied all day to Ahab and Jehoshaphat were from the school of the prophets. They thought they could learn how to become a prophet by going to school.

The recommissioning of a prophet.

The Lord never comes to a man and recommissions him when he is in despair. "God shall forgive thee all but thy despair".

Why? Because despair is lost faith in God, and God can never do anything with one who has lost their faith in Him. He may do

something *to* them, and He will certainly do something *for* them, but He can do nothing *through* them until something happens to the man himself.

What are you doing here Elijah? Fear and panic had gripped the Tishbite, and so God leaves him there, that we may learn the lesson that even the strongest of will melt to nothing when God withholds His support. Then he starts to pour forth a torrent of excuses and complaints, about all that he had suffered in the service of the Lord.

The Lord never commissions men who are in despair

David wished for the wings of a dove that he could fly away. Moses wished he was dead; Simon went fishing, while Elijah sat under a juniper tree until finally he went to sleep. Men tend to do dumb things when they are demoralized. “And so the Lord caused a deep sleep to come upon His servant.” What a blessing sleep is. How many times we have been refreshed by that wonderful gift of God, for the Lord gives His beloved sleep. It is a wonderful gift of God. I can remember times in my life, when if the Lord had not given me sleep, I would have been in total despair. And as he lay under the juniper tree “behold an angel came and touched him.” Thank God for the ministry of the Angels. Are they not all-ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. God sent an Angel to Elijah, and He will do no less for you and I when we need refreshing. It's all of grace. Grace never inquires into our worthiness; whether we are deserving or not.

Micah 6:8. “He hath told thee O man what is good, and what the Lord requires of thee, it is to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”

Behold an Angel came and gently touched him to awaken him that he might see and partake of the cake baked upon coals, and drink water from the cruise the Lord had provided. Like Elijah we must eat and drink for the journey is too great for us. We must feed on Christ, for then and then only, will we find the strength for the task.

Elijah was under orders with explicit instructions from God to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his stead. He never went to the school of the prophets to appoint his most promising student. That would have been a total waste of time. Prophets and preachers aren't made in theological seminaries. You need more than letters after your name to say where you have been, but to be able to say I come from someone. For the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. It's what He is saying, now, right here in this present hour. Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Today, not tomorrow, but today, right now. A man is a fool to commit himself to any project without a present clear word. It must bear "thus saith the Lord" upon it, or it is doomed before he starts.

**It takes more than just preaching New Testament
Doctrine to recover New Testament results.**

Doctrine is necessary, absolutely necessary, but it takes more than this. It takes revelation to do the works of God. The Word records God sent angels to many of His servants for various reasons. They came to Daniel's aid and stopped the mouths of lions.

The New Testament is the history of prophetic proclamation

An angel came and awakened Peter in prison, broke his chains, and caused the iron gates that led to the city to open of their own accord so he might convey him to freedom. One came by night to Paul to assure him that if they stayed on board the ship none would perish. They helped Lot to flee from Sodom. Neither is their ministry limited to the early Christian era, even though they may not seem to manifest themselves as they did in days of old.

Hebrews 1:13-14. "But to which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool? Are not all of them ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

This and other scriptures make it abundantly clear what their relationship is to us who are the heirs of salvation. For the Christ's

body is a heavenly institution, imagined by God, designed and built by Him, paid for by His son. It is His dwelling on earth. It's constructed out of redeemed humanity, men, women, and children out of every kindred and tongue. Because of its heavenly nature and ownership, this house was not built to be hired out, but rather to be cared for by servants for its owner.

**We need voices that can interpret
the mind of God to His people.**

When ambitious men begin to take control, it degenerates. It happened in the school of the prophets set up by Samuel.

An elderly pastor planning to retire duly sent off a young man with preacher's itch to a seminary to be trained to take over his pulpit. In due course the young man returned with his diploma and whereupon the older man resigned. After a short period of time the people began to groan under their new pastor's preaching prompting the former pastor to write to the principal of the theological college saying, 'sir you have sent us back a goose.' To which the principal replied, "Dear Reverend, you got back a 'goose' because you sent us a goose; we don't lay the eggs, we only hatch them."

**The Prophetic is a succession of anointing
And not a succession of teaching. *Austin Sparks.***

THE SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS

What were the schools of the prophets? And for what purpose were these institutions established? Firstly let's take a look at the prevailing conditions at the time that Samuel was called by God to be judge over Israel, and it may help to see how these schools came into being.

1 Samuel 3:1. “And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision.”

Firstly the word of the Lord was precious, that means it was rare, scarce, highly valued and greatly neglected. Secondly there was no open vision. These comments lead me to believe that there was a great need for a prophetic voice for God to be heard, and its effects to be evidenced. The reasons for this state were many and varied but could be summed up in a few words. Israel had forsaken the Law of the Lord. Eli was old and was almost blind; he had lost his vision. His sons whom he never attempted to restrain were wicked. While in the Tabernacle the lamps on the lamp stand had all but gone out. As a consequence there was little light and revelation for the service of the Lord. Into these conditions in Israel God called Samuel to prophecy, and judge. Eventually God's judgments fell on Israel. Eli died, his sons were killed in battle, and in due course Saul became King. The first time these sons of the prophets come into view is when Samuel becomes involved in establishing the reign of Saul.

1 Samuel 10:5-6. “And it shall come to pass, when you are come to the city you shall meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a psaltery and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy, and the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and shall be turned into another man.” This company of prophets more than likely came from the school of the prophets founded by Samuel. From here on we find a number of such schools. (2 Kings 2:3-5; 4:38; 6:1-7).

Samuel's was the first recorded school, and then Elijah and Elisha carried on this system of training young men. The students of these schools became known as “the sons of the prophets” as they continued in the tradition of what Samuel commenced. The Spiritual condition within the nation at this time was at very low ebb. The priesthood was living in open sin and rebellion.

1 Samuel 2:12-17. “Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.” This passage records that not only Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas, but also the whole priesthood had sinned very greatly before the Lord. It was for this reason that the schools were instituted. The purposes they were involved in were; one, to write up the chronicles of the nation, so as to keep accurate records of their history for future generations. And secondly, because there was no open vision, and the word of the Lord was rare, there was a great need for propagating and disseminating the knowledge of the Law. The aims were, that by these means Israel might be revived, and so return to the law of the Lord. The Priesthood had neglected the Law of God and as a result the nation was living in sin and disobedience, and so needed to be instructed in righteous living again. This happened many times in Israel's history, Nehemiah 8:1-9. The sons of the prophets were academics. The thought that they were being trained to become anointed prophets; is absurd, and utterly ridiculous.

Certainly they prophesied as did Saul, but that didn't make them prophets. There is little doubt that the 400 prophets who prophesied all day to Ahab and Jehoshaphat were students of the schools. But if the kings really wanted to hear the truth, why didn't they send for Elijah? He was still around, he wasn't dead. The point is, they were accepted because they had been to the schools of the prophets, but you need better credentials than that. Jehoshaphat wasn't convinced by their prophecies, and even Ahab had serious doubts, so much so in fact, that when he went to battle he went in disguise. If God hasn't called you the ministry of a Prophet, no school of prophets can give it to you. If He hasn't given it, you haven't got it. No academy can make you a prophet of God.

They called it “what is it”?

It takes prophetic insight to bring enlightenment in perplexing times.

Exodus 16:14-15. “And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as a hoar frost on the ground. And when the children Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is manna: for they never knew what it was, and Moses said unto them, this is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat.”

There’s no record that Moses ever called it Manna, for manna means, “What is it.” But Moses, the man of God, most certainly knew what it was, even if they didn’t. To the question of the children of Israel Moses replied, “This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.” Vs 31 “And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna.” They ate it for forty years. They lived on "what is it" all that time, and never recognized its value. If you don't know the value of something, you'll soon grow tired of it. It had a medicinal value, for when they ate it, their clothes never wore out, nor did their shoes wax thin. There was no corruption in this food that God sent from heaven, fresh every day. Yet they complained, telling Moses how they loathed this diet that God had provided for them. This is similar to the attitude some Christians have toward the Word of God. They never see its true worth. We have whole movements living and being sustained on “what is it.” In fact many Christians couldn’t give you a scriptural reason for why they do many of the things they do. That’s fine when everything's going okay, but when the going gets tough, they fall away from the very things that would help to get them through.

Psalms 34:1. “I will bless the Lord at all times his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

Psalms 50:23. “Whoever offers praise makes a way for God to work.” But how many do bless the Lord at all times? Anyone can sing when the sun is shining bright, but God wants to hear a song in our heart at night. These are principles to live by.

MANNA

What we believe, and why we do certain things must be soundly established mentally, as well as by experience. We greatly need saints (the young especially) to be rooted and well grounded in these things. All of us need to be reminded about what did happen in the 1948 outpouring. We need to know why we do what we do. This is foundational to every experience in God. We don't just do things because it's the "in thing." For me personally there is a good reason as to why I praise the Lord at all times, even when I don't feel like it. I do it firstly because I am a priest unto God. As a priest I must have an altar for priestly service. But what's the use of an altar without a sacrifice? The sacrifices of the New Testament priest are not pigeons, rams and bullocks, but they are spiritual sacrifices, such as the fruit of our lips in adoration to God Hebrews 13:15.

Secondly I do it because God inhabits the praises of His people. This brings His presence and power into our every day lives as we go about. It clears the way for Him to work on our behalf. To all those members of the body of Christ who claim to be called to feed and exhort the people of God I would say, "The husbandman that labours must be first partaker of the fruits" 2 Timothy 2: 6.

We have a responsibility to the saints to let them see that we practice what we preach. Now back to the manna. You couldn't gather the manna inside your tent; you had to go outside to get it. Every time God moves to bring further light and restoration through prophetic revelation by the scriptures of the prophets, people have to move out of sterile, organized Christianity to move on. It had to be gathered daily. Yesterday's manna bred worms. You always knew when someone was serving up old manna because it stank. On the sixth day of the week, they gathered twice as much as on any other day. Every generation has the task of gathering up every restored truth since apostolic times, and also be moving in the present truth. Yesterday's stale manna will not provide the kind of nourishment needed to complete the journey. We can only be sustained by living bread. Proverbs 11:26. "He that withholds corn, the people shall curse him."

THE PROPHETS AND THE KINGDOM

The Kingdom is timeless and unlimited. The Law and the prophets were until John and from that time the gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses into it.

Matthew 11:13. “All the prophets and the law prophesied until John.” Until John! What made John so special, so different? It was because he introduced the Kingdom. The prophets prophesied concerning the King and His Kingdom, but John declared, “It's here.” Behold the Lamb behold the King. “Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” and then “Behold the Lamb of God.” The King had arrived to set up His kingdom in the hearts of all that would receive it.

The Prophets predicted it, but now John declares that it as having come. Dear reader, whoever you may be, the Kingdom of heaven has come among us; the opportunity of a lifetime presents itself to you to enter. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross and your acceptance of that sacrifice for your sin, guilt, and shame, guarantee your entrance to His Kingdom, and seal your eternal destiny. What an opportunity, what marvellous grace and wonderful peace. It's a kingdom of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, kindness, patience, faith and righteousness. It's an absolute fact, that a man is only as happy as he is righteous.

Hebrews 1:9. “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

The King of the Kingdom came and manifestly walked among the people of Israel for three and a half years. This kingdom that the prophets spoke so much about, and inquired diligently into, came, and still the religious leaders refused to acknowledge it. For us who have received Christ the Kingdom has come, and continues to come, until the day that it becomes as visible on earth as it is in heaven. Until that great day, when every eye shall see what we have known since we received it in mystery form, our prayer is, even so Lord Jesus come. What dreadful retribution came to those

(who should have known better) who failed to acknowledge Him while He was in their midst. He was with them for 33 years physically, and for three and a half of those demonstrated the Kingdom by confirming all the law and the prophets. What terrible judgment they brought upon themselves.

Matthew 23:38. “Behold your house is left unto you desolate.” “House” refers not just to the temple, but to the whole nation of Israel. Those, for whom the Kingdom was intended, let it to slip through their fingers. Because their tradition blinded their eyes, it was taken from them. The veil of their temple was rent asunder. Finally God departed and forsook the house, which He once dwelt, and consecrated by His presence among them.

In Acts the apostles attended the temple and synagogues for a season but eventually they left and turned to the Gentiles who readily accepted. What need is there for form, when that which the form pointed to has arrived. The thought of a suffering Messiah was unacceptable to the Jewish leaders so they rejected Him. It's a Kingdom that Jesus told the inquiring Nicodemus that if he is to enter into it, he must be born again, and unless he is, he will never see it. We have entered the Kingdom by repentance and faith; we have a new constitution that is held together by the power of God. We have literally been reconstituted. We are kept by the power of God from all assaults of demonic principalities and powers who would surely overwhelm us but for Him who is able to keep us, and present us faultless to the Father.

The plight of natural Israel is solely due to sin and disobedience. The prophets predicted what the consequences would be if the nation rebelled and turned their back on God. In so doing they passed sentence on themselves when they rejected “Messiah” Their tenure of the land has always been dependent on their keeping covenant. Their future looks very bleak indeed even today. That they stand on the verge of another holocaust in our lifetime looks eminently sure. Revelation 11 records the ministry of the two witnesses in Jerusalem during the last three and half years, likening the city and its people to Sodom and Egypt. This is Jacob’s time of trouble.

THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE

At our birth we have received potentially everything that divine life has to give, but we are babes, and as such, we have to grow in our awareness and appreciation of all that has been provided. There is much to explore and the possibilities are limitless. It's a kingdom whose subjects live by faith in the ability of their king to do all and more, of all that He has said He will do.

Matthew 11:12. “The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”

Luke 16:16.

“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presses into it.”

Notice: “since that time the kingdom of God is preached.”

The anger of Christ was manifested time and again at the Pharisees for their relentless opposition, forbidding their people to enter in.

Matthew 23:13.

“Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven to men, you neither go in yourselves, nor suffer those entering to go in.” We face everything from devils to men in religious organizations obstructing our way. To enter requires violence. Adversaries surround each door of truth.

The passive never even get to first base

When we speak of the Kingdom suffering violence we are not talking about the Kingdom itself being under attack, but rather that use of force is necessary to force one's way into it. It really means that it calls for violence, and that the violent take it by force. There's great opposition every step of the way confronting those who want to go on with God. It expresses the earnestness that men must have if they are to enter into it. It's an earnestness that's not just a “once” but continually ongoing. Paul likened it to a race in Galatians when he said, “Ye did run well, who did hinder you, so that you no longer obey the truth?”

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

The great transition.

“Every fresh reproduction of the church, in any part of the Roman Empire or beyond, in the days of the Apostles, came about, not by taking with them a fixed mould, and trying to pour people into that mould to reproduce the shape of things that existed in another place. But it began with ‘life’ The Holy Spirit sent from heaven.”

Austin T Sparks. That statement is so profoundly true.

1 Peter 1:12.

“Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into.”

The rite of baptism is a testimony to the fact that the old order is over, and that everything from now on has to have a new beginning, as does someone who has died and been buried. For the dead to live again they must have life. This new order differed in every way from the old. It was alive, flexible, mobile, and full of power, and was never intended to become an institution. It was a Kingdom with a constitution already in place, and a Monarch, a sovereign ruler, head over all.

The reluctance to enter, and the prejudice against this kingdom were great on every side. The most vehement opposition came from the religious. That has always been so. History shows that last anointing (Saul) always persecuted the new (David). We can't expect it to be any different today.

This opposition is not limited to just “the religious.” It becomes clear that more sinister forces are at work than mere flesh and blood the moment you start to press into God. Sometimes the resistance seems way beyond that which you feel you are in the great scheme of things, but the enemy of our soul resists with great determination all who seek to gain a foothold on his territory.

CLASSICAL OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS

The prophet was not by office a predictor of future events, but primarily a preacher of righteousness. He was sometimes referred to as 'the man of God'.

They were the divine philosophers, and instructors, guiding the nation in piety and holiness. They generally led retired lives, being seen publicly only when they had a message from God to deliver to those in authority, or to the nation at large. Their lifestyle was plain and simple, although their behaviour at times was often quite bizarre.

I have no doubt that Jeremiah would have been dismissed by most of us today as a whiner, not the kind of person whose company you would seek. John the Baptist was definitely quite eccentric, to say nothing of the strange behaviour of Ezekiel.

Of the reformers men like John Knox, Calvin and Luther all have their critics, but where would we be today without their undeniably great contributions to the cause of Christ? It is said of General William Booth that he was intolerant of those who were not "sold out", and suffered fools lightly. His disposition was such that only one of his children was able to work with him.

The Old Testament Prophets, from the time that the kings began to reign, took on the duty of the school of the prophets, because of the backslidden and apostate condition of the nation.

The sons of the prophets were students of the prophets. They were being trained in devotion to the Law, religious observances, and piety. They were not a monastic order, but a group of theological students studying the history of God's people, together with sacred music and poetry. There were several of these schools from the time of Samuel. Elijah was the principal of schools, at Gilgal, Bethel, Jericho, and possibly other places as well. Elisha succeeded Elijah over these schools and even enlarged them.

2 Kings 6:1-2. “And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, behold now the place where we dwell with thee is too straight for us. Let us go we pray thee unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell.”

They were involved in a building program to house all these students. Their numbers had grown as seen when Ahab inquired of the 400 in 1 Kings 22: 6. Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha were training students in the law and piety, but they were **not** incubating prophets.

The writing prophets.

The Old Testament writing prophets were divided into two groups, the Major, and the Minor Prophets. When we think of major we think of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, but we must not forget that Moses the law-giver, and David the psalmist, were profoundly prophetic, providing us with almost as much in their writings as the major prophets. The Minor Prophets comprise the remainder of the prophetic books. They are not minor because of their lesser importance, but rather because of their size. The gospels draw heavily on the Major Prophets, while the book of Acts and the epistles are continually referring to the Minor Prophets. The number of quotations from both major and Minor Prophets is quite amazing when taken collectively throughout the New Testament. No wonder we're told that the church is built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. Only those who were called and anointed for that particular task undertook work for God in Old Testament times. It was the same for prophets, priests and kings.

Prophet:

1 Kings 19: 16.

“And Elisha the son of Shaphat shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.”

Priest:

Exodus 29:29.

“And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them.”

King:

2 Samuel 2:4. “And the men of Judah came, and here they anointed David King over the House of Judah.”

I Samuel 10:1a. “Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over His inheritance.”

Or preacher:

Acts 1:8a. “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you.” In fact everything dedicated to the service of the Lord had to be anointed. Should it be any different in the new order? The New Testament is no different as seen in Christ.

Luke 4:18a. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.”

Paul and Barnabas:

Acts 13:2. “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to.”

The speaking prophets:

James 5:10. “Take my brethren the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and patience.”

This is the first mention of God sending a prophet to Israel.

Judges 6:7-8. “And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites, that the Lord sent a prophet unto them.”

There were other prophets before this, such as Adam, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and many others. Then at other times, God Himself would come down to set things in order, but on this occasion he sent an **unnamed** prophet to tell them that they had not obeyed His word. Of the speaking prophets, there are many that are mentioned throughout the Old Testament, both men and women.

BALAAM

Balaam was not a false prophet, but he was for hire. He was not an Israelite. There were a number of heathen prophets, Balaam being the most prominent. The story of Balaam is one of great interest and not a little controversy. Some claim he was merely an enchanter, and soothsayer used by God for this one occasion. But the truth of the matter is, he was a genuine prophet of God that the Lord judged, after he had betrayed Israel.

That he knew Jehovah is very clear. He had a reputation for prophesying with great accuracy. The story is taken up in Numbers 22 and continues through the next two chapters. The last mention of him in the Old Testament is when he is slain by the army of Israel.

Numbers 31:8. “Balaam the son of Beor they slew with the sword.” Because of his reputation, and the fact that Balak king of Moab was fearful of confronting the children of Israel in battle, Balaam was approached to curse the people of God.

Numbers 2:6. “For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed.”

Numbers 2:8. “And he said unto them, lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again as the Lord shall speak unto me: and the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.”

When Balaam was offered a reward to curse Israel he went to the Lord and inquired as to what he should do.

The Lord responded in Vs 12. “Thou shall not go with Balak thou shalt not curse Israel for they are blessed.”

At first Balaam accepted the Lord's decision, but after he was approached the second time and offered great wealth and honour, he went to the Lord again, only to receive the same response. The point to see is that he was a genuine prophet who betrayed Israel

personal gain. Not only did he commit treason, but also he prostituted his gift to his own destruction. Jesus graphically illustrates Balaam's fate in the following.

Matt 7:21-23

“Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say unto me in that day Lord we have prophesied in thy name then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you workers of iniquity.”

The love of money is the mark of a servant of Satan.

2 Peter 2:15.

“They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Boer, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.”

Jude 11.

“Woe unto them, for they have gone the way of Cain, and ran eagerly, greedily, in the way of Balaam for reward, and perished.”

We are left in no doubt that Balaam perished because of his love of money and position. Not just money, but the love of it, has destroyed many of God's people.

The love of money causes a man to lose respect for God's Word.

He will compromise his own integrity to get it.

He opens himself up to deception because of it.

The next step, if he hasn't already taken it, is moral depravity.

Covetousness and immorality are like Siamese twins. They usually go side by side. Wherever you find one, the other is not far away. Money is the breeding ground for the ultimate destruction of many. The love of money is at the root of so much evil among members of the present religious system.

THE PREDICTIONS OF PROPHECY

There are two types of prophecy, conditional, and unconditional. The prophetic predictions of things to come are chiefly conditional. Many of these prophecies are stated in conditional terms and are qualified by “Ifs”.

2 Chronicles 7:14. “If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.”

The prophet foresees future events in the light of the righteousness or the wickedness of people with whom God has made covenant.

The unconditional prophecies are the fixed plans of God that He has foretold that He will do to bring about His purposes, to bring all mankind and creation into total submission to His will. He says He will do it, and that’s final.

Unconditional.

I will build my church. And He will.

I will send the Spirit. And He did.

I will come again. And He shall.

All the above are examples of unconditional prophesy.

Conditional.

All prophecy that includes man as its subject is based upon conditions of one kind or another even though they may not be stated in the prophecies. The blessings are based upon the conditions of obedience, while curses are the result of disobedience.

I Samuel 12:15. “But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you as it was against your fathers.”

When Israel wholly followed the Lord He caused them to prosper. The prophet is not only a foreteller but a forth teller, one who speaks out.

PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE

The law of prophetic perspective in reading some prophecies of scripture needs to be clearly understood.

Luke 4:18 i.e. Christ never completed this quotation that He took from the book of Isaiah but purposely stopped short, omitting the following part. “And the day of vengeance of our God.” The Lord only repeated that portion of the prophecy that was pertinent to that day. The last portion of that particular scripture is yet to be fulfilled. This can be seen also in the prophetic utterance John the Baptist gave when Jesus came to Jordan to be baptised. John’s prophecy applied not only that moment in time, but spanned right across the gospel age to the Second Coming of Christ.

Luke 3:16-17.

“John answered saying unto them all, I indeed baptise you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:” “Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner, but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable.”

The same is true of an incident recorded in Matthew 11:1-3 where John, who was languishing in prison, sent some of his disciples to Jesus with the following question.

**“Art thou He that should come,
or should we look for another”?**

John was having misgivings as to whether Jesus really was the Messiah because He was doing just the opposite to what he thought He should be doing. John expected Him to be punishing the religious class, and burning everything up, but instead He was undoing the heavy burdens, and crying out, “Come unto me all you that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” The timing of prophecy; and “who is prophesying to who” is crucial.

LAW OF COMPOUND PROBABILITY

Each detail of prophecy doubles the chances of the prediction not coming to pass. For instance, a prophecy with one detail has one chance in two of being fulfilled. Either it will come to pass or it won't.

A prediction with two details has one chance in four of being fulfilled. This shows how impossible it would be for many of the prophecies of scripture to be fulfilled apart from Divine inspiration and power. For example a prophecy with thirty conditions has one chance in a billion of coming to pass.

There are literally hundreds of prophetic passages in scripture by different writers who never knew one another.

James 5: 10. "Take my brethren the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord."

These brethren were divided by time, hundreds of years, hundreds of miles, culture and language. In addition they were not all Jews, some were Gentiles, yet concerning Christ's first coming their prophecies completely harmonize, and were fulfilled in minute detail. To claim that these prophecies in the Bible are of human origin is absurd.

The tendency towards a fixed position is constantly recurring. We all face the same choice sooner or later, "to become servants of the Spirit, or prisoners of tradition." God Himself is imprisoned within the limitations of organizations that frustrate the fuller counsel of God for His people. And so when God moves on, we must move on with Him.

**The origin of inspiration is in the Spirit of God.
It will never be found in organization.**

A great hindrance to what God wants to do is what we know, not what we don't know.

SUMMARIZING OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETIC

James 5:10. Two characteristics that make “our brethren the prophets” stand out are: They suffered because of their message. And they patiently endured.

Hebrews 1:1-2. Amp. “In many separate revelations, each of which set forth a portion of the truth, and in different ways, God spoke of old to our fathers in and by the prophets. But in the last of these days, He has spoken to us in the person of a Son, whom He appointed heir and lawful owner of all things, also by and through whom He created the worlds, and the reaches of space, and the ages of time, that is, He made, produced, built, operated and arranged them in order.”

Each revelation prophetically setting forth a portion of the truth; i.e., Adam and Eve; Noah’s Ark; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Moses Tabernacle; David’s tabernacle; Solomon’s Temple; Jonah and whale.

Matthew 11:13. “For all the prophets **and the law** prophesied until John.” The law prophesied.

Hebrews 8:5. “For see that you make all things according to the pattern, model, shown to you in the mount.”

All these earthly things were shadows, patterns, types, and examples of heavenly realities. Then there are the different ways in which God spoke. He spoke through men, and events, in dark sayings, and in parables. These things that are written have occupied the minds of hundreds of thousands of men and women down through the centuries, more so than any other record left to mankind. And because it is a living record, He still speaks to us today. Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. We all have ears, but unless we take time out to be still in His presence we shall never have the privilege of hearing for ourselves, but will always be dependent upon someone else to tell us what He's saying. We ought to use the ears that He has given us. “My sheep know my voice and the stranger they will not follow.”

THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLE AND PROPHET

The ministry of the Old Testament prophet was among many other things Foundational to the New Covenant.

Romans 16:25-26.

“But is now made manifest by the scriptures of the prophets.”

Ephesians 2: 19-20. “Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.”

Foundation: Gr **“Themelios,”** something on which to build. Jesus Christ is the only true foundation. Time and again the Gospels draw heavily from the O.T. prophets; and on the writings of the Gospel recorders, and the personal statements of the Master Jesus Christ. The task of the Old Testament Prophets with the Apostles of Christ was to lay the foundation of Christianity. That foundation is Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:11. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

1 Peter 1:10-12. “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you.”

“They sought to find out to whom this grace was to come, and when it was to come, which the spirit of Christ working within them indicated when He predicted the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.”

The prophets foretold the entire new covenant and its full blessings. They predicted all we have. From these and other scriptures it is abundantly clear that the church is built upon the foundation of the

Prophets (Old Testament) and Apostles (New Testament) Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

Luke 24:25-27.

“Then He said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, And beginning at Moses and all the prophets He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

1 Corinthians 12:28.

“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets”

Apostles first; because they are the infallible interpreters of the Old Testament prophets. The ministry of the apostles and prophets in these days **is a mobile one**. They are given for the purpose of edifying the body of Christ. Their special function is both inspirational, and interpretive according to the scriptures.

Acts 13:36. “For David after he had **served his generation** by the will of God fell asleep.” It is not enough just to serve our generation. Like David, we must serve it “by the will of God.” It is their God given task, like generals in an army, to lead God’s people into the full purpose of God. We are not here to help God, but to serve Him, and to do that according to His will, not ours. The task of a father is to provide inspiration, give protection, and make provision, rule, and in other words constitute his house. This is the function of the Apostle and prophet, and in that order, firstly apostles, secondarily prophets. The ministry of the prophet is second in rank of importance to the church. When Christ ascended on high He gave gifts of men to the church. This is what Paul is saying in:

Ephesians 4:8. “When he ascended on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”

Ephesians 4:11. “And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.”

This quote is taken directly from: -

Psalms 68:18-19.

“Thou hast ascended on high, and led captivity captive.” Paul receives this principle truth from the prophet David. And David goes on to say: “Thou hast received gifts for men.”

The **man himself is the gift** of the risen Christ to the Church and the world. Because the man himself is the gift, then **the prophet operates in a higher realm than the gift of prophecy**. The Holy Spirit gives the gift of prophecy, but the Lord Jesus Christ gives the gift of the prophet. He is a Divine appointee; he is the representative of the prophetic mantle of Christ. He is the gift of Jesus Christ to the church, and he has been “set in” by God.

1 Corinthians 12:28. “God hath set some in the church.”

Psalms 68:18b. “He gave these gifts for the rebellious also”, that any who will repent and receive Him might be saved.

The day is coming in the not too distant future when apostles and prophets will arise and minister with great power and authority in the body of Christ. They will speak as oracles of God, and it will not sit well for rebels, who are not in right relationship with God or their brethren. The rebellious who refuse to receive correction and instruction, and they are found in every congregation will come under severe judgment. We see an example of this in the early church.

Acts 5:1-11.

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the Apostles feet. But Peter said why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?.....you have not lied unto men but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: And great fear came on all them that heard these things.”

Ananias and Sapphira conspired to lie about their finances to the Holy Spirit over the amount they had received from the sale of a property. Peter said you have not lied to your brethren but to

God. As a consequence they paid dearly for their sin.

Psalm 68:18b-19. “That the Lord might dwell among them.” He loves every rebel, desiring him or her to come in complete repentance to Him that He might save him or her and dwell with him or her.“ Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits.”

God daily provides, supports, and upholds us with His great salvation. The Lord’s desire is that He might dwell among us so that He may daily load us with benefits. One of the wonderful benefits He has provided us with, are these gifts of gifted men. Next to our salvation, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, these ascension gifts of the apostle and prophet are the greatest gift that God has given. Why? Because they watch over the church, “as they watch and care for our souls.” They are faithful stewards of His work. Bond slaves of their Saviour, gentle with all that the Master has purchased with His blood. In addition they are inspirational and directional in their service. In these days of restoration these two ministries will be last to be restored, because they are the most mature. They were the first to disappear as the church slid into the dark ages, and they shall be the last to be restored.

The following passages are in direct reference to the Apostles of the Lamb, those special men who were chosen personally by Christ.

John 17:6.

“I have manifested thy name unto the men which you gave me out of the world: they were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.”

John 17:9.

“I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which you have given me.”

John 17:12.

“While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name, those you gave me I have kept, and none of them is lost, except the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.”

John 17:20.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them that shall believe on me through their word.” Now the focus of the Lord turns to us: **Yes you, and I.**

John 17:20.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word.”

We are the fruit of the early church apostles who with Christ, and the O.T prophets, are the sole storehouse of truth in this age. There is nothing we can add to their record, (we have no extra biblical revelation) nor is anything there that we can take from it. We, who have believed, and trusted in Him through their word, are truly the literal fruit of the apostles of Christ. The early church apostles are the “apostles of the lamb.” The apostles in the last days will be the “servants of His body.” The two ministries of apostle and prophet are complimentary, and absolutely necessary for the great task of bringing true freedom and unity to the body of Christ by declaration of the truth.

Ephesians 4:13.

“Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the **knowledge** of the Son of God, unto a mature man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

It all started with one perfect man who chose twelve, and from them came forth a multitude, the whole body of Christ. Now the order is in reverse. We are coming from an abundance of confusion, where every man is doing that which is right in his own eyes (because there is no king, no law or order in Israel,) to a perfect man again. Only this time it's a corporate man, a body with many members but only one head, Christ. The means that will produce this is the Holy Spirit working through His gifts to His Body; apostles and prophets. For this purpose God gave them, and to this end will they labour.

Ephesians 4:1-3.

“I beg you that you walk worthy of your vocation, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Vs 13 “Until we all come in the unity of the faith.” Only unity of faith and purpose shall bring this about. That purpose is to become like Christ.

THE NEW TESTAMENT PROPHETS

It is a terrible responsibility to be called into service and to be held accountable for the eternal souls of men. **They are to take heed to themselves**, and not to abuse the office, nor to lord it over the flock.

Ephesians 4:11. By these gifts the church will be perfected. In these gifts is our individual development, growth, and ultimate maturity. The prophet's ministry is two fold, (however I am in no way limiting it to this.) It is telling-forth, and foretelling.

As a seer he brings spiritual interpretation to a present word in the eternal Word, for the people of God in a specific place, in a particular moment in time, for a definite purpose. There's a desperate need for prophetic insights. We need prophetic leadership if we are to prosper in the promotion and advancement of the Kingdom of God in our midst. His ministry is also foretelling. He should be in touch with God to tell us about things to come. Before He returns, the Lord said that there would be famines, pestilence and earthquakes in diverse places. You don't need to be an Einstein to know what Jesus said. We already have His Word. The prophet's ministry in foretelling has two elements timing and location.

We need to pray that God will give us ministries that can be so in tune with Him that they can warn us when and where these things are going to happen. The prophets of the Old Testament brought a clear word. Surely we should expect nothing less as we hasten on to the consummation of the age.

1 Peter 4:11. "If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God; If any man minister, let him do as of the ability that God gives, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

They are a voice for God. They do not have a monopoly on this position. God wants voices that He can entrust with the secrets of His purpose. But every word of every voice must be judged and weighed in the balance of truth.

Amos 3:7. “Surely the Lord will do nothing, but He reveals His secrets unto His **servants** the prophets.

If the Lord says He will do nothing, surely this would seem to indicate that He would not send pestilence, famine, or earthquake, without some warning through His prophets.

If this is the case, why then are we not hearing more specific revelation from God? I believe that, like the apostles of old, we are not ready, or as yet we are not able to bear it. There needs to be maturity beforehand as well as an eagerness to hear. The ministry of the prophet is not an easy one. He may not be as popular as one might imagine either.

The ministry of the apostle and prophet will come in full power, because Christ loves His Body, and He knows that they are essential to His full purpose for His body. These ministries will be desperately needed in these last days, to keep the revelation of God’s Word pure, to preserve righteousness, and to manifest God’s power in the midst of the people.

Acts 9:31.

“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”

Acts 5:11-13. “And great fear came upon all the church and as many as heard these things. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders done among the people, and of the rest did no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.”

The ministry of the apostle and prophet will help to restore the fear of the Lord in these last days to His people. It’s time for those people who claim the title of apostle or prophet to manifest the signs of their ministry? In my experience the men who most closely manifest any resemblance to these ministries make no claim to them at all. I am persuaded that most are not aware that they are apostles or prophets. But make no mistake, they will be made manifest in due course.

2 Corinthians 12:12. “Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.”

Can a man be an Apostle without these signs? It would be a very brave man that would say that they could. There is a distinct difference between the gift of prophecy and the office of a prophet. People who have the gift of prophecy need to be careful that they do not go beyond the realm of comfort, edification and exhortation. When the gift of prophecy goes beyond scriptural boundaries, it can, and often has caused great harm.

2 Timothy 4:2. “Preach the Word: be instant in season, and out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” The ministry of the prophet can be directional and correctional, as well as governmental. He gives direction to the servants of the Lord.

Acts 13:1-3. “Now there were in the church at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch and Saul. As they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands upon them and sent them away.”

Certain prophets and teachers at Antioch were ministering unto the Lord and fasting and praying. Then the Holy Spirit spoke. How does He speak? The answer is obvious; He spoke through the prophets. In this way God gave Divine direction to His servants. Through the prophets came supernatural revelation, and thus direction was given. The prophets in Antioch had a clear word, as precise as did the prophets in the Old Testament.

Acts 21:4. “And finding certain disciples (we tarried seven days) who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.” Here again we have another case of the Holy Spirit speaking through his servants the prophets.

Certain disciples we are told, “**Spoke through the Spirit**” to Paul. An interesting point to note is seen in Acts 21: 8-15. Paul and his company of disciples arrived in Caesarea lodging at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the original seven chosen by the church in Acts 6. It so happened that Philip had four daughters that prophesied. After many days a certain Prophet called Agabus arrived from Judea. Seeing Paul he took his girdle and bound his own hands and feet and said, “**Thus saith the Holy Ghost**” and began to prophesy what would become of Paul if he went to Jerusalem.

The point is that although all of Philip’s daughters prophesied, God never let them open their mouths although Paul had been there many days. Instead, God waited for a prophet to make the trip from Jerusalem to Caesarea to the home of Philip. The reason is the difference between the ministry of the prophet, and the gift of prophecy. God set aside the gift of prophecy in those four girls and brought the prophet into the midst. This differential was not on the basis of sex but rather between ministry and gift. Agabus was prophesying futuristically, directionally, and personally. This is the realm of the prophet and not the prerogative of someone who is not a recognized prophet.

A prophet can be so anointed, that he is borne along by the Spirit of God into a realm of revelation when he is in the midst of apostolic and other ascension ministry that far excels normal prophecy. This in turn will lift the people and cause the whole body of believers to rise into heights beyond the flow of the gift of prophecy. The office of the prophet also brings correction and warning.

Titus 1: 10-11.

“For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision; whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake. One of them, a prophet of their own said, the Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, and slow bellies. This witness is true. Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in doctrine.”

“For filthy lucre’s sake” Beware of any ministry with their hands out, seeking to fleece the sheep and rob them of their money.

It’s true, God wants to prosper His servants, but when money becomes the driving force of their service they need to be taken aside and spoken to. Some ministries are not willing to come unless they are allowed to take up their own offerings. If they persist in majoring on money they should be shunned.

This “thing” that money seems to do to some men is not just the problem of travelling ministry. I have found that shepherds are just as susceptible to greed as any ministry. Thankfully they are in the minority. Try their spirit, and if they are innocent and only erring in judgment, then pray that God will convict them. I also realize that some who claim to be prophets are more pathetic, than they are prophetic and should receive accordingly. The hour is coming when God is going to send a word of correction that will stop the mouths of all deceivers.

Paul instructions to Titus were that an **overseer** must be blameless as the **steward of God**. He could not be self-willed or given to anger; nor violent or given to wine. When God brings a word of correction, things will begin to happen. We have already seen some of the mighty among the TV ministries completely shut down, and it has only just begun.

Ephesians 3: 3-5.

“How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery of His will which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the spirit.”

The revelation came **by the Spirit** to particular members in the body, the apostles and prophets, whose task is to lay **Christ** the only foundation upon which the church is built. This doesn’t mean that God has chosen not to speak and reveal truth to all His people, for He most certainly does. But when it came to laying the foundations of truth in the early church it was done by His chosen

apostles who together with the scriptures of the Old Testament Prophets gave us a sure foundation. Other foundation can no man lay. The early church continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine. What was their doctrine? It was the teachings of Jesus on the Kingdom, attested to by the scriptures of the prophets while He was with them, and for a further 40 days after His resurrection before His ascension.

1 Corinthians 14:29-30. "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sits by, let the first hold his peace."

The apostle Paul seems to be addressing the prophets here. It appears he is referring to spiritual revelation.

1 Thessalonians 4: 15.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord". Here Paul is talking about the Second Coming of Christ. Where did this teaching come from that Paul talks about so much? We know how John received his revelation while on the Isle of Patmos. But what about Paul and the early church, Jesus said, "I have many things to say to you but you are not ready for it just yet." There are many other references to support the theory that divine revelation came through prophecy, by the word of the prophets.

1 Timothy 4:1.

"Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times."

How did the Spirit speak? He spoke by the prophets through direct prophetic revelation. Paul's record is what the Spirit said about the latter times. Things that were future as far as the early church was concerned, but that would be important for the church in the end time.

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

To prophesy comes from the Greek "**prophezio**" meaning "to speak inspirationally for another." Prophecy is not preaching, and preaching is not prophecy. There is such a thing as having a prophetic anointing on one's preaching, and true preaching must be anointed, but there is a difference. Preaching is the product of study and prayer, but prophecy is flowing in supernatural utterance under divine inspiration. It is often spontaneous, and imparts life. Reference to the gift of prophecy is found on numerous occasions in 1 Corinthians chapters 11—14.

1 Corinthians 12:7. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

In Vs 10 of this chapter we find it clearly stated that one of these manifestations or gifts is the gift of prophecy. Then in chapter 14: 3 "He that prophesieth speaks to men." What do they say when they speak? "They speak to edification, exhortation, and comfort." Those are the boundaries within which the gift of prophecy operates in the life of the believer and in the gatherings of the believers.

It is a gift of the Holy Spirit; it may be coveted, desired and sought after. It is in no way to be confused with the ministry of the prophet. Once having received the gift, it is our responsibility to stir that gift up, and give ourselves to it by prayer, and meditation in the Word, in order that we might edify the body. Meditation in the Word, reading, and study, are imperative if we want to be used.

Colossians 3:16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing each other in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

We must begin to lay up a rich deposit of the Word within us from which we can draw upon. The Word of God is a far more reliable source than some imagery out of a vivid imagination. If we don't have a storehouse to draw from, then God will not be able to effectively speak through us. The more we apply ourselves to the

study of the scriptures and prayer, the deeper will be the quality of the Spirit's operation through us, the greater the comfort will be, the mightier the exhortation will be, the more richly the body will be edified. This is the kindergarten of the revelation gifts.

Romans 12:6b tells us "to prophesy according to the proportion of our faith." God has given to all a measure of faith. Faith is the avenue by which everything we have received from God has come to us. It is left to us to activate the gift of prophecy as we have activated our salvation, and every other gift we have received. The key is faith. If we ask for bread He will not give us a stone, if we ask for fish He will not give us a serpent. Faith is 90% courage, and 10% tenacity.

**Many times the word of knowledge operates
inconspicuously within the gift of prophecy**

In my own personal experience I have found that on many occasions the word of knowledge worked hand in hand with the gift of prophecy. When this occurs it is often without the knowledge of the person that's prophesying.

1 Corinthians 14:24.

"But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever, or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is among you."

Some have erred in this gift by going beyond the measure of the grace of God to them in their gifting. It can cause harm to members of the body, bring reproach on the gift and eventually destroy the credibility of the one who operated it. The gift of prophecy is supernatural in its purest form. May God help us to speak out only when He has spoken, and shut up in times of great stress, when He hasn't. General prophecy harmonizes with scripture. It does not add too the Scriptures. We have no extra biblical revelation to add to what has already been said. Faith and trust activate the gift, knowing that if you have asked for bread, then He will not give you a stone.

SHOULD WE JUDGE PROPHECY?

All prophecy is not of God. Prophecy that claims to be in His name may or may not be so. A mere claim is no proof. A prophecy that comes to pass is generally accepted, as being from God. However this test is not absolute. Deuteronomy 13:1-4. Here God says He may allow a sign or wonder to come to pass to prove His people and see if they will act contrary to His word.

**The real test of a prophecy is not to see if it comes to pass,
but to see if it's in harmony with the word of God.**

This is the final and only test. Anything contrary to the Word is false, for God will never contradict Himself. Prophecy should always be judged. Just because somebody speaks concluding with the words, "thus says the Lord" does not put the prophecy beyond question.

"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge." The gift of prophecy must be judged because it is finite, while the Word of the Lord is infinite, it endures forever. Prophecy is limited in its scope. In other words it may not necessarily apply to the whole body of Christ. But the Word of the Lord endures to all generations. It is confirmatory in nature. We prophesy in part, and after it has been given, it is the responsibility of the individuals to whom it was given to respond. It is not for imposition, manipulation or control, but for edification, comfort and exhortation. There have been cases where saints have been prophesied over telling them to marry a particular person, or divorce one partner and marry another. This is blatant abuse of the gift, and deception of the worst kind. People who use prophecy for such things can expect the same reward as Balaam. In the Old Testament false prophets were taken out and stoned. We are not suggesting that, but it demonstrates how seriously the Lord views false prophecy.

If someone has given you a prophecy and you are unsure about what has been said, then get another opinion from respected senior brethren. I personally would never act upon a word given to me by anyone until it was confirmed, or was confirmation to what God had already been talking to me about.

WE HAVE A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY

If we have the gift of prophecy, but are not “a Prophet,” we must stay within the boundaries of edification, exhortation and comfort. I have been in the ministry for many years now. I have been walking in this experience for over 45 years. In other words, I'm saying that I didn't come down in the last shower of rain. Over the years I have known many servants of the Lord who have been called home. In some cases they were taken quite suddenly. Then others were struck down with illness and after a time went to be with the Lord, while others were miraculously healed. There is a great tendency for well meaning people to feel that they have to must prophecy pronouncing complete recovery and deliverance for the afflicted. I have always considered that members of the body, who have not been called to the office of a prophet, should not prophesy over the terminally ill. My reason for this is simple; we already have the Word of the Lord.

2 Peter 1:19-21. “We have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto to a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts. Know this that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation”.

There are three spirits that operate. The Holy Spirit, the human spirit, and evil spirits. The human spirit may have the best intentions in the world, but it is not subject to the mind of God or divinely inspired, but human, natural, carnal and fallible. As such it is absolutely powerless, and will without fail disappoint.

We already have a sure word from the Lord. "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Do we need anything extra biblical from well meaning people motivated by humanistic instigation and imagination? I have seen many saints stumbled by false hope created by prophecy from a well-intentioned human spirit. Only the mature should operate in times of severe testing. It is not every believer's prerogative.

THE MINISTRY OF THE MINSTREL

Ephesians 5:19.

“Speak out to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, offering praise with voices and instruments, and making melody with all your heart to the Lord.” The following is an example of a musician being used in connection with prophecy. Just as singing is a great inspiration to men who preach, so also is music and worship to those who prophesy.

2 Kings 3:15-16.

“But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass when the minstrel played the hand of the Lord came upon him; and he said, thus saith the Lord, make this valley full of ditches.” Elisha found himself in a situation that he would not have personally chosen to be in. The atmosphere was in no way conducive to prophecy, so he sent for a minstrel. Worshipping the Lord with our voices, and playing instruments with great anointing, makes way for God to manifest His presence through the prophetic in such a way as to give direction to us in our gatherings. People can come under the mantle of the spirit of prophecy, while singing a prophetic song. It is sometimes referred to as ‘the song of the Lord.’ Prophecy, exhortation, comfort, and healing are released, with many lives being touched in the most profound way when this happens. In our ministry to the Lord we should not be surprised if the Lord's responds to what we are doing. They that wait upon the Lord is corporate as well as personal. We need to learn to wait upon Him, and not just rush in to His presence and then rush out. Many times during worship demons have been flushed out and people have received mighty deliverance.

Acts 10:38. “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him.”

1 Sam 16:23. “And it came to pass when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROPHETIC

Amos 3:7. “Surely the Lord will do nothing, but He reveals His secrets unto His servants the prophets.”

There is a great need in the body for prophetic insight, to have understanding of the times in which we live. We need to be moving in present truth; as Pioneers of life on the cutting edge of what God is saying. Having an ear to hear what the Spirit, (not the last seminar) is saying. Where are the prophetic brethren like Daniel?

Daniel 9:1-3. “In the first year of Darius..... I Daniel understood by books, **(the scrolls of Jeremiah the prophet)** the number of years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem; And **(because of what Daniel now knew)** I set my face unto the Lord to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.” (He meant business). Because of his diligence Daniel was given understanding concerning the times in which he was living, and of future events. As he waited in earnest upon God Gabriel came to him and gave him one of the greatest prophecies in the Old Testament, concerning Judah and Jerusalem, the “70 weeks.” Everything that God has done, is doing, and will do concerning His people has been foretold and recorded for us by the writings of the prophets.

Next we have the Lord declaring through Isaiah, the birth of a man whom he calls by name 200 years before he was born.

Isaiah 45: 1. “Thus said the Lord to His anointed Cyrus whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of the secret places, that you may know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.”

Five things are listed that Cyrus would do for Jehovah.

Be a shepherd to the people of God Isaiah 44:28.

Set the Jews free Isaiah 45:13.

Decree the rebuilding of the Temple.

Restore the city of Jerusalem Isaiah 44:28.

Subdue nations Isaiah 45:1.

THE PRESBYTERY

Gr. Presbuterion translated elders, (Luke 22:66; Acts 22: 5) and presbytery in I Timothy 4: 14. “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the presbytery”.

Since the restoration of the “Laying on of hands” in 1948, the practice of inviting a group of “Presbyters” to come and hold “a presbytery” is common practice among many church groups around the world.

The “Presbytery” is usually made up of a group of prophets who have a proven ministry, and are known and respected by the local pastor or oversight of a particular assembly. By invitation they come to a church and over several days they minister to the saints who usually have prepared their hearts by prayer and fasting to receive prophetic utterance over their lives. These prophecies are usually audio taped, and then gone over by the recipient and their oversight, to enable them understand and function in their God-given placement in the body of believers.

Some fellowships place great store in this particular function of the presbytery where every saint in their congregation receives this ministry. There is no little doubt that it brings great blessing to those who have been ministered to in this manner for a season. However it must be said that there is little evidence that it was practiced in the early church. Upon examination of scripture the only people who were ministered to in this fashion were seasoned ministers who were being “sent out” on a specific mission by the church. In many places today it has degenerated into a crystal ball gazing circus, that leaves most that are ministered to eventually disappoint, because it fails to deliver. Therefore this ministry should not be entered into lightly but only with great sobriety.

An appropriate time would be for the ordination of elders, and when deacons are being set in: and when ministry is being sent forth to pioneer in another town, or leaving for foreign lands temporarily or

permanently from a body of believers. On such occasions in my experience it has been greatly anointed, and the candidates richly blessed. When Pastor Reginald Layzell from Glad Tidings Temple in Vancouver Canada visited New Zealand in the early sixties, (He was in those meetings in 1948 when the doctrine of the "Laying on of hands" was restored in a blaze of glory) he told us that in its beginnings **it was accompanied by much prayer and fasting** on the part of the seeker as well as those ministering.

Quote: "The awesome presence of God was very strong in the early days. The responsibility of directing God's people by prophecy was laid upon those who were chosen of God to so minister. Hours were spent in prayer, heart-searching, and fasting. It was regarded to be a special calling, not one to be entered into lightly, as a solemn responsibility before God, realizing it was a terrible thing to misdirect one of God's children. The same awesomeness and heart-searching was asked of those who wished to be ministered to."

The act of ministering to various ones called was regarded as a very solemn occasion. Those wishing to be ministered to were required to fast for four or five days. The main prophet was the one who looked to the Lord for direction as to which of those who had been fasting he was to call upon to be ministered to. He usually did the leading in the prophetic utterances, and then the others who also were recognized as having such a calling, would prophecy what they believed the Lord had given them regarding the one being ministered to. Some of the prophetic utterances were not complimentary, but rather corrective. However most were directional. In some cases different gifts of the Spirit were imparted to the seeker. Many were told of the kind of service God was calling them too, and how they were to stir it up. In other cases ministries were confirmed.

1 Timothy 5:22. "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins".

Finally we need to remember that as we lay hands upon people we are endorsing them and their ministry. It's not something to be entered into lightly.

IMPARTATION THROUGH THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

Habakkuk 3: 3-4. “God came from Teman, and the Holy one from mount Paran, Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.”

Habakkuk opens up the subject of power in the hands. People are beginning to realize that there is spiritual power in the hands of certain individuals. It can be counterfeit or genuine. Within the church the doctrine of the laying on of hands is foundational to our Christian faith. Its primary function is for impartation of spiritual gifts, healing, empowering for a task, and blessing.

Hebrews 6:2.

“Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

2 Timothy 1:6. “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.”

The gift is likened to a fire, which if it is not stirred frequently and more fuel added, will soon go out.

The Gr. to stir. Anazopurein “**To kindle up the fire and add fresh fuel.**” It really doesn't matter in what capacity we function in the body of Christ, we need to be continually stirring ourselves. The laying on of hands is an outward form of blessing found in both the New and Old Testaments. By this means blessing was given and received.

Matthew 19:15.

“But Jesus said suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.” The laying on of hands was a Hebrew custom that seems to have been accepted and later authorized by God in Israel and the church.

Genesis 48:14. “And Israel stretched out his right hand, and placed it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.”

For transfer of authority.

Laying hands upon men publicly has been practiced throughout biblical times in all ages when blessing them, or ordaining and setting them apart for a particular task to be undertaken for God.

Numbers 27:23. “And he laid his hands upon him and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.”

Deuteronomy 34:9. “And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him.”

Mark 16:18. As part of the great commission for divine healing. “They shall lay hands upon the sick and they shall recover.”

Mark 5:23. “My little daughter lies at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay your hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.”

Luke 4:40.b

“And he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.”

Luke 13:13. “And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.”

For signs and wonders.

Mark 6:2b. “What wisdom is this which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands.”

Acts 5:12.

“And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;”

There is no substitute in life for one touch of the Master's hand.

THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM

Jeremiah 33:10-11.

“Thus saith the Lord; Again there shall be **heard** in this place, which you say shall be desolate, without man and without beast even in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man, and without inhabitant, and without beast, The voice of joy, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, 'Praise the Lord of Hosts' for the Lord is good, for his mercy endures forever, and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord, for I will cause the captivity of the land to return saith the Lord.”

Revelation 19:10b.

“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” Wherever God is moving in restoration and refreshing the visitation will always be accompanied by these voices.

The voice of joy. The voice of gladness.

The voice of the bride.

The voice of the bridegroom.

The voice of them that shall say praise the Lord.

The voice of them that bring the sacrifice of praise into

The house of the Lord.

Wherever the captivity of God's people is being turned these voices are sure to be heard.

Psalm 126: Read the whole psalm. “When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion we were like them that dreamed. When our captivity was turned, then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.” This prepares the way for the Voice of the Bridegroom in our midst, which is the spirit of prophecy.

There's a relationship between these voices one triggers the other.

Psalm 67: The psalmist requests of the Lord these three things. Be merciful to us. Bless us. Cause your face to shine upon us. And then he gives his reasons. That your way oh Lord may be known upon the earth. That your saving health may be known among all nations.

PRAYING PROPHETICALLY

Zechariah 10:1.

“Ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain.”

There is not a serious student of prophecy alive who would not agree that we are living in the termination of time as we know it. If this is the case we should be praying the prayers of the prophets.

Acts 3: 20-21.

“And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.”

We should be conversant with the statements of the prophets with regard to things that are yet to come so we can pray intelligently. The day that Adam fell God Himself gave a prophecy proclaiming restoration through the seed of the woman **Genesis 3:15**. From the time that Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied “The Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints”, to this present day the statements of the prophets in scripture have foretold the plans and purposes of God. We who are living in this the end of the age should be searching the record in holy writ for the things that are yet to be restored, and praying for their fulfilment in our midst. Daniel and Nehemiah did, and so should we.

Then we have in the Law and in the feasts of Israel shadows that are as prophetic as any of the flesh and blood prophets in the Word of God. It will be to our own detriment if we ignore the prophetic nature of the types and shadows in the Old Testament.

Amos 3:7.

“Surely the Lord will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants the prophets.”

Hebrews 8:5a.

“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.”

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH PERSONAL PROPHECY?

There are two schools of thought as to how we should respond to personal prophecy. The one says that you should just leave it on the shelf because true prophecy is creative and sovereign, and in due course God will bring it to pass. The other approach is to go out and try to fulfil the prophecy in response to the prophetic utterance. To respond positively by cooperating actively with the word received. The key to this as in everything else we do in God is to keep our balance. No personal prophecy should be acted upon without a lot of prayer. Counsel should always be sought from brethren that you trust and are genuinely concerned for your well-being. Remember in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. We must also have the witness of the Spirit of God within us but if you are in doubt do nothing. In the mouth of two or three witnesses let everything be established. God will never take a person to task for taking a little time to prove something to his or her own satisfaction. When in doubt don't.

Romans 12:2.

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

1 Thess 5:21. “Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.” To prove things is a Christian's duty. To act hastily is to invite heartache and sorrow.

2 Corinthians 13:5a. “Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves.”

There are some positive things that we can do with the word we receive? We can meditate on it; that is prayerfully think about what the prophecy said. Ask the Lord to confirm it through a second and third witness. When that has happened, then give yourself wholly to it. Examine the motive of your own heart. The Psalmist said that the integrity of the upright would guide him. A clean heart is the greatest insurance a person can have when seeking to respond to subjective leading such as prophecy, or holy impressions to the heart.

WARRING A GOOD WARFARE

1 Timothy 1:18-19.

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies that went before on thee, that thou by them might war a good warfare. Holding faith, and a good conscience: which some having put away concerning the faith have made shipwreck.” Here Timothy is commanded to war a good warfare by these prophecies. If we believe God has spoken then we need to respond. The word “Charge” literally means command. Paul seems here to be referring to those spiritual gifts that were imparted to Timothy in:

1 Tim 4:14.

“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, that was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the presbytery.”

2 Tim 1:6.

“Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.”

They were to be a stimulus to his faith and good conscience. Having a good conscience meaning to know oneself, to act confidently because you now have the knowledge that God has spoken to you.

Finally all prophecy is not by the name of, nor inspired of God. A mere claim such as “Thus saith the Lord” is no proof at all. If the prophecy comes to pass it is generally accepted as from God. However this test is not absolute.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3.

Here God states that He may allow a sign or wonder spoken by a false prophet to come to pass to prove His people and see if they will act contrary to His own word.

The only sure and final test is to see if it is in harmony with the revealed will of God in His word. Anything contrary to the Word is false, for God will never contradict Himself.

THE AMAZING POWER OF PROPHECY

On many occasions to numerous to number here, I have seen both in my own life and the lives of other servants, the most amazing things happen as the prophetic word came forth.

People in the depths of despondency, desperate to the point of despair have in an instant had their spirit lifted marvellously, and then gone forth renewed in hope.

It will exhort, stir up, and warm us up.

It will edify, build up, and strengthen us.

It will comfort, bind up and soften us up.

It will convict, open up our hearts. I Corinthians 14: 3, 24-25.

It will teach us, "All may prophesy that all may learn".

I have seen God reveal the secrets of the heart, and the deep things of an anguished soul, and through prophetic utterance set their spirit free in the most remarkable way. In hindsight I knew that only the prophetic could have effected such a radical turn around. The prophet finds himself saying things that naturally he could not possibly know apart from the Holy Spirit. It is as though a button is being pushed in the heart of an individual with the most amazing transformation-taking place.

There is a great need for the ministry of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be more evident than they are. There are limitations in operation and they must be adhered to. No New Testament prophet ever used his gift to control another person's life. They confirm what is already known.

For New Testament believers Romans 8:14.

"As many as are led by the Spirit" is the way God intended. Manipulation by prophecy is to violate the right and privilege that we as believers have to go to God through Christ for ourselves. He has promised to lead and guide us into all truth.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Our fascination with the future.

It is seen in Astrology, new age, channelling, horoscopes, palmistry, numerology, psychic, fortune telling and witchcraft. There's a tremendous interest in psychic phenomenon, futuristic events, and especially those things that affect our lives.

How the world acts. Psychics are making a fortune marketing their questionable ability on television right across the US on TV. Their focus is always on the same three things, Health, Wealth, and Romance. These are the three basic things that most people feel they must have to be happy. They must have good health; they must be free of financial pressure so as to have enough to do the things they have always wanted to do. Lastly, they crave to love and be loved in return.

People want to be sure that what they are doing or about to do is going to pan out okay. We all want the decisions we make to be the right ones. Nobody wants to do the wrong thing. Yet in spite of this many people don't want to accept the responsibility of making that choice, so if it doesn't work out they can put the blame on someone else. We just want to know that what we are about to embark upon is the correct path to take. Even with all the best advice in the world, things don't always turn out the way you would like. Because of the uncertainty of the future, one of the greatest urges basic to human nature is to know that the direction you're taking will get you where you want to go. This is why personal prophecy in the church is so popular given peoples concern for the future. Doom and gloom pervades the very atmosphere we breathe. The news is almost always "bad news." How will we fit into the scheme of events? We want to know because we long to be sure that everything is going to work out to our best advantage. And God is not against this.

Take care of the present and the future will take care of itself

The present is a reflection of the past, just as surely as the future will reflect the present. It's called the law of sowing and reaping. If you want to know what your tomorrow will be like, look at what you're doing today, for today predicts your tomorrow.

The certainty of the future.

Some things we can be sure about.

1 John 3:4:5: Ten times in these three chapters we are told with absolute certainty that we can know certain things. "Hereby we know", and "We know", are two phrases that are often repeated. Then there are some things we are not able to know because they would be too burdensome to us.

John 16:12. "I have many things to say to you that you can't bear right now."

Acts 1:6. "When they were come together they asked Him saying, Lord will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

Jesus just laid their question aside, telling them in a polite way that it was none of their business, that the immediate thing for them to do was to tarry in Jerusalem until they received power from on high.

Acts 1:7. "And He said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power."

There are some things we are not meant to know just yet. We go through different stages of growth. As babes and little children we don't need to know everything, but just trust our loving parents. Then as little children there are some things we would like to know that wouldn't be good for us to know. Then as young men there are some things we absolutely need to know, like the pitfalls that lie in wait for the unwary, and the over confident.

1 John 2:14-15. "I have written unto you young men, because you are strong, the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for all that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust

of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world.” These things that are mentioned are not the problems of little children, but they are most certainly are the problems of young men. A characteristic of little children is inexperience. A characteristic of young men is strength. A characteristic of fathers is wisdom. The enemy of little children is the false teacher. They tend take what ever is lying around and put it in their mouth. They are gullible. Ephesians 4:14. The tendency is to be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. The enemy of young men is the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh.

1 John 2:16. Because they are strong, there is a tendency for them to rely on their strength. But it’s not by might, or by strength, but by my Spirit says the Lord.

To the fathers John has no admonition in his epistle.

The position of God’s people is not unlike that of Israel when they came to Kadesh Barnea for the last time and were about to cross over Jordan and enter Canaan, the land of promise. We are about to “passover” our Jordan and enter into the land of the promises of God. And the word of the Lord to Joshua for Israel of old is just as applicable to us as it was to them. To leaders He is saying: “Be strong and of a good courage.” Why? Joshua 3:4b. “For ye have not passed this way before.” Simply, because we have not passed this way before

To the congregation He is saying: “Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you” Joshua 3:5.

It’s today for us, and tomorrow for God.

Whether or not we participate in the wonders of God's tomorrow, is solely dependent upon whether or not we set ourselves apart for God today. It is always today for us. We may not know what tomorrow will bring, but if we walk with Him today, we need have no fear for tomorrow, but rather the reverse.

For tomorrow is the Lord’s.

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANITY

To be in the vogue, to be contemporary, up with the play, par for the course. More and more the present religious system seems to be watching each other to see what the latest trend might be. We don't want to be left behind. The catch phrase seems to be "As many as are led by the musicians, they are the sons of God." Numbers are everything. Os Guinness believes we have a "copy cat" syndrome so we do not have to think or evaluate seriously. It's all done for us.

To muse means, "to think." To amuse means "Don't think." Just lie back, put your brain into neutral, turn on your television and let someone else do your thinking for you. We now have a generation of young saints who must be entertained or else. They rarely bother to take their Bibles to church because in most cases they're unnecessary.

A. W. Tozer says, "The great God of entertainment has taken hold of the mind of retarded saints of our day and life is intolerable without some form of entertainment." They sing about it, sway to it, and buy the latest sounds to satisfy an insatiable appetite for feeling good. We want to be trendy. Our Bible colleges run courses for drama, music, mime, and dance, with a smattering of theology thrown in. Guys wearing hats in service seems to be cool, with an earring or two thrown in. It's not the world coming into the church, it's just being contemporary. George Bernard Shaw once said, "A fanatic is one who having forgotten his objectives redoubles his efforts."

The issue in Christianity has as always been to mature but Christian maturity seems to have been forgotten in our quest for feeling good.

Every age has its unique temptations that barricade the way to Christians reaching full potential. May God create a hunger in our hearts to know the truth and not let it fall to the ground?

THE END

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