

INTRODUCTION

1. Please take God's Word and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 12 as we look once again at the subject of spiritual gifts.
2. Today we're looking at "The Gift of Prophecy."
3. Prophecy is the kind of teaching that fascinates many people.
4. During the Gulf War, 911, books and articles came out in the dozen referencing Bible prophecies that are still yet to be fulfilled.
5. In fact during that time people were asking, "Is this Armageddon?"
6. Even today, peoples curiosity in prophecy has increased due to the coronavirus.
7. Our subject this morning has nothing to do with actual prophecies but with the gift itself.
8. As we look at this gift this morning, we will follow a similar outline as the last two gifts we have covered.
9. We will look at:
 1. The meaning of prophecy
 2. The people who possessed this gift
 3. The purpose of prophecy

LESSON

I. The Meaning of Prophecy

The Greek word for prophecy is propheteia. It comes from pro, "before," and phemi, "to speak"

It literally means "to speak before"

"It does not mean to speak before in terms of time but to speak before in terms of an audience (John MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p.104-5).

The term is not necessarily revelatory (i.e., revelation from God) or nonrevelatory (i.e., proclaiming something God already revealed in the past).

It is simply a communication gift.

The term never meant to predict the future. That idea came in the middle ages when the English word took on that meaning.

In fact, Webster's dictionary defines it a "prediction."

"The connotation of prediction was added in the middle ages.

Although many of the prophets made predictions, that was not their basic ministry and the idea is not involved in the original terms used to describe them and their work.

The original terms, in fact, did not necessarily carry the idea of revelation.

God revealed a great deal of His word through prophets, but much of their ministry was simply proclaiming, expounding, and exhorting with revelation already given" (John MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p.303).

John Calvin said this is not "the gift of foretelling," but "the unique gift of dealing with Scripture, not only by interpreting it, but also by the wisdom they showed in making it meet the needs of the hour."

The term, along with its English cognates ("prophet," "to prophesy," "prophetism," and "prophetic"), derived from a group of Greek words which, in pagan Greek, mean "speak forth," "proclaim," "announce."

In biblical Greek, however, these terms always carry the connotation of speaking, proclaiming, or announcing something under the influence of divine inspiration. (Elwell, Walter A., and Barry J. Beitzel. ["Prophecy."](#) *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* 1988 : 1768. Print.)

So the gift of prophecy is:

1. To Proclaim the Word of God

1. This is a preaching gift

2. It is *the gift of preaching the message of God* (Newman, Barclay M., Jr. [A Concise Greek-English dictionary of the New Testament.](#) 1993 : 156. Print.)

3. This is a discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproof and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden (Thayer, Joseph Henry. [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti](#) 1889 : 552. Print.)

4. In 1 Corinthians 14:3, preaching is defined by Paul's use of 3 words: Paul says, But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.

1. Building up

2. Encouraging

3. Comforting

5. "Paul prefers prophecy to all the other gifts because it is a greater source of edification, a statement that can hardly be made to the prediction of future events" (John MacArthur, 1 Corinthians, p.271).

6. A prophet in the Bible is always one who speaks out for God.

7. Prophecy then is the gift of "forth-telling" not "foretelling."

2. The Categories of Proclamation

1. Revelation

1. Gr. apokalupsis, "disclosure" or "unveiling." It is the "disclosure" or "unveiling" of God in His person or in His word.

2. John MacArthur, "There has never been a time in the history of God's dealing with men that someone hasn't had this gift, because at all times God had someone speaking His word" (Spiritual Gifts, p.105)

1. Ezekiel 6:1-3, And the word of the LORD came to me saying, "Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them and say, 'Mountains of Israel, listen to the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains, the hills, the ravines and the valleys: "Behold, I Myself am going to bring a sword on you, and I will destroy your high places.

2. Ezekiel 7:1-2, Moreover, the word of the LORD came to me saying, "And you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD to the land of Israel..."

3. In both passages of Scripture spoke directly to the prophet and told him what to say.

3. The same occurred with the prophet Hosea

1. Hosea 1:1, 2, 4, 6, 9 (God spoke directly to him and told him what to say)

2. Hosea 2:1

3. Hosea 3:1

4. Prophets were in the Old and New Testament

1. Acts 11:27-30, Now at this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up and began to indicate by the Spirit that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius. And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

2. Reiteration

1. This is repeating what God has already said

2. Deuteronomy 5:1-5, Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. The

LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today. The LORD spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, while I was standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain.

3. Deuteronomy 5:22, “These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, of the cloud and of the thick gloom, with a great voice, and He added no more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.
4. Acts 17:1-3, Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.”
5. Acts 17:10-11, The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.
6. Acts 18:1-5, After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.
7. Acts 28:23-27, When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets,

from morning until evening. Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe. And when they did not agree with one another, they began leaving after Paul had spoken one parting word, “The Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers, saying, ‘GO TO THIS PEOPLE AND SAY, “YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES; OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.”’”

II. The People Who Possessed This Gift

1. Certain Believers Before the Time of Christ and During the Formation of the Early Church

1. Prophets were around before Christ

1. Abraham was called a prophet (Genesis 20:7)
2. Aaron was a prophet (Exodus 7: 1)
3. Judges 6: 8 - "that the Lord sent a prophet to the children of Israel..."
4. Samuel was a prophet (1 Samuel 3:20)
5. Gad was a prophet (1 Samuel 22: 5)
6. Nathan was a prophet (1 Kings 1:8)

2. Prophets existed in the early church

1. 1 Corinthians 12:28-29, And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?
2. Ephesians 4:11, And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.
3. W.A. Criswell, "Before the writing of the New Testament, the office of 'prophet' was a vital one. The prophet told the infant church what it should do, believe and teach. Hence, Ephesians 2:20 reads, 'And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.' When the New Testament was complete, the office of prophet ceased. It was no longer needed. Our appeal now is to the inspired, written word, not to a man. There are no more revelations to be added to God's holy book" (p.166).
4. The office of prophet has ceased but the gift itself hasn't

2. Certain Believers Have This Gift Today

1. When the revelatory gifts ceased they were not mentioned anymore
 1. The gift of healing, miracles, and tongues are only mentioned in 1 Corinthians and Acts
 2. Prophecy is listed in the other lists mentioning gifts that occur in other books
2. We are told the only thing that will stop this gift from operating is the arrival of the perfect thing
 1. 1 Corinthians 13:8-10, Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we

prophecy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.

2. In Joel 2:28-32 we are told that prophecy will occur "before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord" (v.31).
3. Paul says in Romans 12:6, Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith.

III. The Purpose of the Gift of Prophecy

1. Evangelism

1. 1 Corinthians 14:22-25, So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

2. Edification

1. 1 Corinthians 14:3-5, But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

3. Exhortation

1. Gr.paraklesis, from two the words: verb para, is "near" or "to the side" and kaleo, "to call." It primarily means "to call to the side," "calling It to one's aid." "to admonish" (1 Thess.4:9-10).

2. 1 Corinthians 14:3, "But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation..."

4. Comfort

1. Gr.paramuthia, from para, "near" and muthos, "speech." is is primarily a speaking closely to anyone.

2. 1 Corinthians 14:3, But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation (comfort).

CONCLUSION

1. The gift of prophecy is a communication or preaching gift.

2. The office of prophet has ceased but the gift hasn't, preaching is still going on.

3. The purpose of the gift was evangelism, edification, exhortation, and comfort.

4. Since that is the case, can you see why we need it today in the church.

5. But before you can consider any of the gifts, you have to make sure you know Him personally, that you have been forgiven of all your sin and the righteousness of Christ applied to you.

6. Do you know Him this morning?

7. If not, you can right now.

8. Bow you head and ask the Lord to save you.

9. The Bible says in Romans 10:13, for **“WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”**

10. You do that as we pray.

11. Let's pray.