

Word & Spirit Conference, Session 2, Part 1

by David Ravenhill

David Ravenhill's sermon highlights the essential unity of the Word and the Spirit in the life of the church and the importance of prophetic ministry.

Duration: 46:34

Scripture: Joel 2:28-29, Matthew 22:29, John 4:24, Acts 2:17, 1 Corinthians 12:1, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 19:10

Topics: "Christian Life", "Prophetic Ministry", "Unity of Word and Spirit"

Description

David Ravenhill emphasizes the essential unity of the Word and the Spirit in his sermon, highlighting the dangers of separating the two. He reflects on the historical divide between evangelicals and Pentecostals, urging a return to a balanced understanding that both the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit are vital for spiritual growth. Ravenhill shares personal experiences with prophetic words, illustrating their significance and the need for proper interpretation and application. He encourages the congregation to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, particularly prophecy, as a means of edification for the church. Ultimately, he calls for a fresh appreciation of both the Word of God and the Spirit of God, as they work together to fulfill God's purposes.

Transcript

Lord, I thank you in advance for the word that's going to be delivered through your servant David. Lord, I thank you for it melting hearts. I thank you for it stirring us.

I thank you for it being sweet to our mouth, Lord. And Lord, and perhaps even sour to our stomach, Lord. Have your word have effect in our lives.

And we just bless him now in Jesus's holy name. Amen. David Ravenhill.

Well, it's good to be with you this morning. Appreciate that time of wonderful worship and almost feel guilty about teaching. It's one of those times when you'd rather preach and just open the word in a different sense.

But I must confess I've babbled over this particular session this morning. And I've actually ended up changing what I was going to say. I'd spend hours and hours and hours preparing a particular message.

It's all here if you want to... I'll sell you a copy of it. On the spirit and the word. And I was wanting just through the word of God to bring that that balanced and balance between the two.

And I've really had sort of mixed emotions ever since I got word about the conference and the title of the conference. Somebody said mixed emotions or feeling you get in the pit of your stomach when your mother-in-law drives over the cliff in your new Cadillac. And I've sort of had mixed emotions.

First of all that such a conference was necessary. That's the bad feeling. The good feeling was the fact that we're beginning to understand our need of the spirit and the word together.

And what God has joined in together let no man put asunder. And basically the bottom line of all that I had to say in all of those notes dealt with that, that the reconciliation again of the word and the spirit. Jesus said to the Pharisees, you do err not knowing the scriptures or the power of God.

And you can be in error either way. And I would think the evangelicals would be horrified to say that they were in error simply because they neglected the word of God. But on the other hand, oh the things of the spirit, on the other hand Pentecostals would be equally horrified if they were told that they were in error because they neglected the word of God.

And Jesus said error is to go to either one extreme. And we've had the word of God and the spirit of God almost like two fighters in a ring. Each you know the crowd divided, each backing its favorite sort of corner.

And ra ra ra you know were men of the word, no were men of the spirit. And sort of having these two fight it out. And that was never God's intention.

God's intention was that the two were never to be divided. After all he is the spirit of truth. And if you take away the word of God, then the spirit of God becomes nothing.

If you take away the spirit of God, then the word of God becomes nothing. And you need both of them. In the tabernacle in the Old Testament, you recall that the lampstand, when Moses was told to build it and place it in the holy place there, he said you to place the lampstand so that it will give light on that which is opposite it.

And the thing that was opposite the lampstand was a table of showbread, which was the word of God. And the lampstand representing the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit's ministry again of enlightening us and guiding us and bringing illumination on the word of God. And again it's just a very basic teaching in one sense that God has never ever intended the two to be separated at all.

And we need to get back to a fresh appreciation of the word of God, a fresh appreciation of the spirit of God. And depending on what sort of corner of the ring you used to be backing, you need to recognize that both of them are absolutely essential. I think it was Spurgeon that somebody asked many, many years ago about two what they considered diametrically opposed doctrines.

And Spurgeon said there's no need to reconcile friends. And the word and the spirit are friends. They're the two wings of a bird.

You take one wing off, it won't fly. And we need again the spirit of the word. So anyway, there's a little bit of what it was.

What I want to do though is shift gears. And I want to give a teaching. I may have given it at the North Bay.

I can't remember if it was. It was in a workshop. But dealing with the anatomy of a prophetic word.

We have two wonderful men of God with us that move in the prophetic. We had a wonderful flow of the spirit of God last night. I've said I deeply, deeply appreciate the prophetic ministry.

My own life has been profoundly impacted through the prophetic word many, many, many times. And I think I've learned some lessons as a result of that. And so I want to share that with you so that it will gain or allow you to gain a fresh appreciation and understanding of the prophetic.

The prophetic may seem very simple in some ways. And yet there's a complexity to it. And I think if we understand that complexity that it will help us.

And so we'll be looking at a number of scriptures. But first of all, I'm going to be using the word prophet, prophecy, and prophesying sort of in a broad sense as we normally do. The prophetic dealing with not just strictly a word of prophecy, but dreams, visions, and so on.

That sort of whole prophetic realm. And the word prophecy is used over 600 times in the Word of God. 600 times in the Word of God.

An old wise expositor told me many years ago. He said, David, the best rule of interpretation of the Word of God is that when God shouts, you shout. When God whispers, you whisper.

That's always a good rule of thumb. If you hear people shouting about what God is whispering about, chances are it's not that important. For instance, the Word of God doesn't shout about women having head coverings.

And everybody would be in agreement here this morning. You know, there's just one verse and that's it. So God doesn't exactly shout about that.

But He does shout about certain things. He shouts about holiness. He shouts about salvation.

He shouts certainly about prophecy. 600 times He shouts about it in the Word of God. So if God shouts about it, we need to shout about it.

If God whispers about something, we need to learn to whisper about it. It's a lot of people shouting about what God whispers about. A lot of people whispering about what God shouts about.

And so, you know, turn that around and you have a good balance here. But from Genesis to Revelation, the Bible talks about prophecy. All the way back into Genesis chapter 5, according to Jude, it says, Enoch prophesied.

Right in the fifth chapter. Now, you can go back further than that, of course, because God prophesied about the seed of the woman and so on. You can even go back further than that to Genesis 1, where God says that He put lights in the heavens.

He says, for signs and for seasons. I have a Jewish friend of mine that I grew up with in Bible college. We've been friends over the years.

And he said the first messianic promise in the Word of God was not the seed of the woman. First messianic promise in the Word of God was in Genesis 1, where God says He put the lights in the skies for

signs. We've seen His star in the east and come to worship.

I sort of like that little interpretation. But anyway, so from Genesis 1, if you like, all the way through to Revelation, the Bible talks about prophesying. Enoch prophesied.

You end up in the book of Revelation that it talks about the fact there are two witnesses and they prophesy right in the last days. If you don't believe prophets for the last days, then you've got problems with the book of Revelation. Because the Bible says that God pronounces judgment on Babylon, and it says, Rejoice over her, my people, and you prophets.

So there are still prophets alive when God pronounces judgment on Babylon. So He hasn't revoked them. He hasn't removed them.

They're alive and well in the book of Revelation, just as they were in the book of Genesis. So we have that all the way through the Word of God. And God foretold a day through Joel when He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh.

Sons and daughters would prophesy. Old men would see dream dreams. Young men would have visions and so on.

Servants, handmaids. And I believe we're living in the fulfillment of that day. We're going to see an increase of it.

I remember even not that many years ago, I think, where it was almost a rarity to hear people talking about the fact that God spoke to them, or a dream, or a vision, and so on. And now we see it mushrooming all over the place. I mean, I could count on just one hand the number of people I knew that moved in sort of the prophetic realm.

And now it's widespread. God is fulfilling that. And yet we need an understanding about it.

And the gift of prophecy, obviously, was given by God to the church for the edification, for the building up, for the establishing of the body of Christ. And what better strategy on the part of the enemy than to try and undermine the prophetic gift, knowing that if he can undermine it, he can ruin, if you like, what God is seeking to do in the building process, the equipping process of establishing God's purposes. And so there is, if you like, a strategy on the part of the enemy to downplay the prophetic, because it is such a wonderful and powerful tool in the hand of God.

It does edify. It does build up. It does establish.

And so the prophetic ministry, and the prophet in particular, is God's voice. He's God's spokesman, the one that declares and announces the word of the Lord. In the book of Exodus, and I'm not going to have you turn to all these, but it says there concerning Moses, that Aaron was given by God to Moses as a spokesperson.

And then it goes on to say in Exodus 7, that was Exodus 4 and verse 10, Exodus 7 and verse 1, that Aaron shall be your prophet. And so a prophet is simply the voice. It's a spokesperson that speaks on behalf of God.

Now the thing that we need to understand or ask ourselves is, is God's voice silent today or has it been silenced? There's a difference. Is God silent today, meaning is this a dispensation when God is not

speaking or has His voice been silenced? I'm here to tell you, I believe His voice has been silenced. It's been silenced by wrong teaching.

It's been silenced by dispensationalism, which really you find way back in the Old Testament. Dispensationalism started with the ten spies. That's where it had its origin.

And they took the word of God that God gave very clearly, very precisely and says, you know, you can go in and possess this land and so on. They came back and said, that word is not valid for today. Don't act on it.

Don't move on it. If you do, you'll be, you know, you'll have all sorts of problems and you'll lose your children and so on. There are giants in the land and so on.

That was the origin of dispensationalism. God gave a very clear word what He wanted to do. And they said, no, don't buy that.

It's not for you. And unfortunately, that has grown in popularity and we need to understand that God has not had a bad case of laryngitis for the last 200 years or 2,000 years. That He wants to speak and longs to speak to us.

Let me just read a verse of scripture in 1 Corinthians 12. And this is just a sort of a preamble to getting to the anatomy of a prophetic word. We'll get there a little while.

But 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 1. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. You know that when you were pagans, in other words, when you were unsaved, you were led astray to dumb idols however you were led. It's always interested me that as Paul commences this teaching on the gifts of the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, that he begins with contrasting the present spiritual condition with their previous spiritual condition.

He says there was a time, addressing the Corinthians, when you were unsaved, you were pagans, and he said you were led astray by dumb idols. Now we use the word dumb today in a wrong sense. We talk about somebody being dumb.

Kids, you know, make fun of somebody by saying, oh, he's a real dummy, meaning he's not, you know, quite that bright. But obviously the word dumb is not used in that way. Paul is not saying you were led astray by stupid idols.

Obviously, idolatry is stupid in that sense. But what he was saying is that you were led astray by a religion that could not speak. In other words, you were led astray by gods that could not communicate.

Gods that could not express their love, they could not express their compassion, they could not express their will, they could not express their wisdom, they could not express their knowledge, and so on. But I'm here to tell you, he says, that this God speaks. He's a living God.

And all the way through, the word of God, the prophets repeatedly would come back to the idols of the nations. Let me just give you a few verses there. Isaiah 46.

And you'll notice one thing that they all had in common, as we just look at a few of these. Isaiah 46 and verse 7. To whom would you liken me, verse 5, and make me equal and compare me, that we should be alike? Those that lavish gold from the purse, weigh silver on the scale, hire a goldsmith and make it into a

god. They bow down.

Indeed, they worship it. They lift it on its shoulder and carry it. They set it in its place and it stands there.

It does not move from its place. Though one may cry to it, it cannot answer. It cannot deliver him from his distress.

And so the prophet says, you know, the thing about an idol is, it doesn't matter how lavish it may be, you can make it out of gold, in this case, and go to the goldsmith and set it down in your house and bow down to it and cry out to it, but it will not answer you. That is the tragedy, again, of so many religions. They have a God that does not communicate.

A God that has no voice. And we have nations, again, bound in various realms of idolatry that have never heard the voice of their God expressing the wisdom of that God and the love of that God, compassion of that God, and so on. Psalm 115 and verse 3, but our God is in the heavens.

He does whatever he pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they cannot speak.

They have eyes, but they cannot see. They have ears, but they cannot hear. Noses, but they cannot smell.

Hands, but they cannot feel. They have feet, but they cannot walk. They cannot make a sound with their throat.

And so again, they have mouths, they cannot speak. They have throats, but they can't make a sound. And then finally, in Jeremiah 10 and verse 3, for the custom of the people are delusions, because it is wood cut from the forest, the work of the hands of a craftsman and a cutting tool.

And it says, verse 5, like a scarecrow in a cucumber field a day, they cannot speak. They must be carried because they cannot walk, and so on. Notice the first thing he says about them is, they cannot speak.

And so Paul then, having that sort of understanding of the gods of the nations, he begins his teaching on the prophetic, if you like, the nine gifts of the Spirit here, by saying, you are led astray by idols that were unable to communicate to you, but the God who is the living God, the true God, wants to communicate. He is a God that is unlike the nations. He is a God that can speak and does speak.

And He speaks today. He speaks through a prophetic word. He speaks through a word of wisdom.

He speaks through a word of knowledge. He speaks His compassion through a word of healing, and so on and so forth. And thank God that we have a God that wants to speak.

And yet we count it strange, don't we? Because even within the church, unfortunately, we still have, in vast sections of the church of Jesus Christ, a God that is a dumb God. And God is wanting to have His tongue loosened, if you like, and we need to do that through an understanding of the Word of God. All right, let me drop down here to just say something distinguishing the difference between the gift of prophecy and the office of a prophet.

I think we need to understand that there is a difference between the gift of prophecy and the office of a prophet. The gift of prophecy is one of the nine gifts of the Spirit that is given to the body of Christ for the

purpose of edification. And all of you, I'm sure, are familiar with 1 Corinthians 14, verse 3, where it says that prophecy has to be for edification, exhortation, and comfort.

In other words, God sort of puts a restriction on the gift of prophecy. It's for edification, it means to build up. Now, there's a little bit of flexibility there.

Let me just say something about edification. The word edification, again, literally it comes from the word to construct something. And how many are in the construction business here? Anybody? Imagine being a piece of wood and the contractor comes along or the builder comes along.

There's a measure of pain, isn't there, as the nails are driven in. In other words, the building process does have, you know, a cutting and so on and so forth. Paul uses the same word at the end of the book of Hebrews, where he says, bear with me in this word of exhortation.

The book of Hebrews was a word of exhortation. It's pretty firm. Now, I think the thing that we need to understand is it is the motivation behind it.

We speak the truth, but we do it in love. And that is the key. That is the thing that governs.

That is the key that monitors everything. My father used to say, before you whip, you've got to weep. Before Jesus went into the temple with the cord and drove out the money changers and so on, he wept over Jerusalem.

And he used to say to people, you have no right to whip until, first of all, you've wept. And I think that's a good rule of thumb. I remember many, many years ago, Keith Green coming to my father.

He just lived down the road, and I was living right opposite my father at that particular time. And Keith Green came to see my dad, and he'd been to a certain place, I won't mention it, well-known ministry. And he had come back and felt that the whole thing was just basically a monument to this man's ego, if you like.

And wanted to go back there. He was invited back the following week, and he wanted to go back and literally sort of pronounce judgment on this huge ministry. And my father basically says, you know, you're not old enough yet to sort of do that.

You haven't earned your stripes. And basically said to him, listen, you've got to learn to weep before you whip. In other words, he sort of delighted.

One of the messages, if you recall, that Keith Green wrote was, just because you're obnoxious doesn't make you a prophet. And a lot of people think, you know, because they don't fit into any particular mold, you know, they've got this sort of anti-church thing. We heard last night a very beautiful expression of having to love the body if you're going to minister to it.

And there's a lot of people, you know, that they've just got something in their spirit against the church, and it comes out. It comes out again with the whip. And we've got to guard against that.

I worked, had the privilege of working with an older man for 15 years in New Zealand. And I appreciate so much being yoked with him for those 15 years. It was a large church.

In fact, for a while it was the largest church in New Zealand. And he said to me one day, he said, David, he said, let me tell you something about the prophetic. And he took me to the woman with the alabaster box that came and knelt down at the feet of Jesus, broke that alabaster box, and lavished the love upon him, and so on.

And Simon, who was horrified to think that the party had been crashed, he'd spent all the money getting this thing organized. After all, his guest was the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and so on. And then this woman who was of ill repute, to say the least, made her way in and breaks the alabaster box, and so on.

And he says to himself, if this man were really a prophet, he would know what sort of woman this is. And my old mentor said to me, he said, David, you know, the prophet's ministry is not always judged by exposing sin. And his concept to the prophetic was, if this man were really a prophet, read about it there in Luke, if he was really a prophet, he would expose this woman.

You know, he wouldn't allow such trash to come in here and do what she's doing. And so therefore, you know, he's not really a prophet. But the prophet doesn't always do that.

And we need to realize that. That, again, it's for exhortation. And there is, again, there has to be that tenderness of first love, if the word is firm, as the book of Hebrews is.

So edification to build up, exhortation, again, to stir up, and then comfort to bind up. And then there's one other that Paul deals with in 1 Corinthians 14, verse 25, where he talks about conviction. They'll be convicted by all.

And the word there to break up, if you like, the conviction that breaks up the hardness of sin. But that's the prophetic gift. And then there's the prophetic office, which is more of a sovereign thing.

It's an office of the prophet that is given by God to the church. The gift of prophecy is something that we need to seek after. The Bible says, earnestly desire spiritual gifts.

One of my old professors in Bible school says, that's as much a command as thou shalt not commit adultery. Let me say that again. Earnestly desire spiritual gifts is as much a command as thou shalt not commit adultery.

I say, thou shalt not commit adultery is a negative sort of thing. The other is a positive thing. But earnestly desire spiritual gifts.

We should earnestly desire. I find in my own devotional time, day after day after day, crying out to God as much for the supernatural as anything else. And we need to.

We need to ask God. God, open the eyes of my understanding. Let me taste that realm.

And especially, Paul says, with all of the gifts, especially that you may prophesy. Because the whole body can be built up. The whole body can be encouraged by it.

And yet, again, there is the office of the prophet, which is given for the equipping of the saints. And in one sense, that's one is sought, the other is more sovereign. If I can just put it very simply.

One is sought with a seek after it. Earnestly desire spiritual gifts. The other is more of a sovereign call of God.

God is appointed in the church. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, and so on. And I believe we're going to see, again, as Brother Phil was sharing last night, a restoration, not only of the prophetic, but of the apostolic.

And we're going to enter into a whole new realm, I believe, of understanding when that gift is fully made available to the church with revelation and understanding. Let me quickly give you the fivefold ministry as far as what they do. The apostle governs.

The prophet guides. The evangelist gathers. The pastor guards.

And the teacher grounds. That's real succinct, but that's what the fivefold ministry, in a sense, the essence of the fivefold ministry. Very quickly, again, the apostle governs.

The prophet guides. The evangelist gathers. The pastor guards.

And the teacher grounds. Let me also say that all five of those ministries have the heart of a shepherd, or should have the heart of a shepherd as the controlling factor, the heart of the bridegroom. Again, that then becomes the motivator, the love for the body, the shepherd who has a love for the sheep, the bridegroom who has a love for the bride.

And if we have the life of Christ within us, even though we may be an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher, we have the heart of a shepherd. He's the great shepherd of the sheep. He's the bridegroom.

And we need to make sure that we allow that expression to come through those giftings. If not, then there's something very seriously wrong. All right, I'm going to deal then a little bit now with the, what I'm going to call the anatomy of a prophetic word and talk about sort of prophetic administration.

And first of all, two things, two extremes, if you like, or two tensions when it comes to the prophetic. One is the word inclusive. The other is the word exclusive.

And you'll find them both in 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 21 and 2 Thessalonians 2 and verse 2. Let me deal with the first one. Inclusiveness, which means embracing everything. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says that you may not be quickly shaken or disturbed by a spirit or a letter or a message as though the day of the Lord had already come.

In other words, there was a message going around the Thessalonians or the Thessalonian church as to the fact that the day of the Lord had already arrived, and it was disturbing a lot of people. And the problem was that many of them had embraced it as the word of the Lord. They listened to this spirit, this letter, this voice, and there was an all-inclusiveness about it.

They just simply included it in with all the other prophecies and so on, but it began to shake their faith. Now, we need to be careful about embracing everything. The word gullible is the word we need to avoid.

On the other hand, we have the exclusive, meaning that we exclude certain things. 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 21, do not despise prophetic utterance, but examine everything carefully. Hold fast to that which is good.

So, there's a certain sense in which we need to be exclusive, not just inclusive. We're not gullible, but on the other hand, we're not skeptical. It's terrible to be skeptical, where we are just constantly critical of everything that is going on.

And so, those are the two tensions. One is that we believe everything. The other is that we don't believe anything.

Paul says there's a balance between the two. We need to examine everything. Hold fast to that which is good.

All right, let's look then at the anatomy of a prophetic word. And the reason I'm sharing this is because I've been around the prophetic for many, many years. Like I said, I've been impacted greatly in my own life by the prophetic.

In fact, the very first prophecy I ever received back in Bible college, when I was maybe 18, 19 years of age, was your carnal mind is enmity against God. I've never, ever forgotten it. You see, I was always one, I like to have everything sort of figured out and, you know, everything had to be logical and so on.

And so, I didn't have too much room for the sort of the spiritual dimension in that sense. And that was the very first prophetic word. Never, ever have I forgotten it.

Your carnal mind is enmity against God. But thank God that he was redemptive. And I've had a number of wonderful words since then.

And one of those words came when my wife and I were first married in 1964. We started working with David Wilkerson in New York City. And there was a gentleman that came at my father's invitation who was moving in those days in full gospel businessman circles.

I think he's possibly dead by now. Wonderful brother who moved in the supernatural realm, had visions that God would give him. And we were in a small meeting.

I imagine there was maybe 15, 18 workers at Teen Challenge that were in my father's living room. We were in a circle. This man got through sharing the Word of God.

And then he was going to minister. And we were all, for whatever reason, having a time of prayer. We're all down on our knees, sort of facing the inside of the chair, just sort of praying, very, very quiet.

And he was moving around. Some people were getting filled with the Spirit. Others were getting prophetic words.

And I was on one side of the room. He was on the other side of the room. And I was crying out internally, not a word coming out of my mouth, but I was internally crying out for wisdom.

I said, God, if there's one longing that I have, it's for wisdom. I have two brothers that are both brilliant. And I was the dummy in the family.

And so, I always recognized my need. And I was literally just crying. I mean, it was a genuine cry by Spirit to God.

And again, not moving my lips. And within about five seconds of me praying that, he came from one side of the room to the other. He put his hands on my head.

The very first thing he said to me, he said, David, God's senior desire for wisdom. He's given it to you. Well, of course, my, you know, the fountains of the deep opened and I started to weep.

And I thought, God, you know, this is, you know, I mean, I just graduated from Bible school. You would have thought I knew that, you know, there was a real God. But there's something about, there's something about the prophetic that just adds to the theology of a Bible school and sort of validates it all, all, just like that, you know.

And then he went on to say, he said, God's going to take you before kings and rulers. And here I was in New York City, freshly married, hardly ever. I mean, I was literally terrified of a microphone.

I was very, very self-conscious in those days and sort of nervous that never did anything publicly. And for God to get me in the ministry was a major, major battle that I went through, which is another story. But anyway, you know, I was just weeping.

And everything he was telling me was the very thing that I hated or could not do in the natural. He talked about writing. I have a book available back there, incidentally, that has been 30 years, at least from the fulfillment of that, fulfilling that prophetic word.

But he said, God will take you before kings and rulers. And he says, now, he said, I'm seeing a picture of you. And he said, I see literally hundreds and hundreds of people sitting in front of you, he said, with brown skin.

He said, they're not black. He said, they're not white. He said, they've got brown skin.

And he said, they're sitting cross-legged on this huge grassy area. And God is going to take you before kings and rulers. My mind was reeling at that time.

I thought kings and rulers, kings and rulers. I was born in England. I knew there was a queen.

I was in the middle of New York City. And I thought, there's no king here. And, you know, it was just, you know, as Paul Cain would say, you know, I thought by this time there was a little bit of hamburger helper that had been added to the prophetic word.

And it was about two years after that, maybe three years after that, my wife and I sailed down to New Zealand by ship, freighter. And we took a team out into the South Pacific Islands. In fact, the second team that we took from New Zealand.

And we went to the island of Tonga. And we were there at the time of the coronation. If you know where Tonga is, it's just a little dot in the middle of the South Pacific.

And different ones on the team were asked to minister. We were working with a Methodist church. And I was asked if I would speak the following week.

And the following week was the, about two days before the coronation. And the venue had been changed. And if you've ever been there to Tonga, Nuku'alofa, it's just a little tiny town really.

And the king's palace is right on the side of the town. And in front of it, there's a sort of a park area, a big huge field. And they'd moved the venue to outside the king's palace.

And when I stood up to speak, I was handed a microphone. And there were literally thousands, I suppose, of people sitting cross-legged on the ground, Polynesians. And I got through speaking.

And the kids on the team said to me afterwards, David, guess what? I said, what? They said, the king stood there on the veranda of the king's palace and listened as you were preaching. And suddenly that prophetic word came back to me. And I thought, my goodness, you know, God really does exist, sort of thing.

Two years later. And so, and there's been many, many others that have been very, very, very clear prophetic words. That's the beauty of the prophetic is the clarity that comes many times.

And I knew beyond a shadow of doubt that I was in the right place at the right time and so on and so forth. Only God could have orchestrated that. I had absolutely no idea about Tonga two years prior to that or three years, whatever it was.

You know, didn't have the faintest idea that I would ever go there and so on. But all of the details that worked out, leaving, going down to New Zealand, going from New Zealand again to Tonga. And then even the fact that even though I was one of the leaders at that time, I wasn't asked until I think it was the third week that we were there that I spoke.

And just the timing of God to bring all that into being is incredible when I look back. Again, my carnal mind really is enmity against God, isn't it? So, we need to understand something. Let me just give you a scripture here.

I had it somewhere. Numbers chapter 16. And I think this will sort of set the pace for what I want to do now.

Verse 12, it's speaking about Moses here who sends a summons to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. And they refuse to come and meet with him. And one of the reasons they refuse to come is, first of all, they are accusing him of lording it over them.

But verse 14, indeed you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. One of the complaints against the prophet, and Moses was a prophet, the word of God says, was your prophetic word has not come to pass. Moses, you told us that you would take us in and give us an inheritance of fields and vineyards.

You said we were going to a land flowing with milk and honey and it has not happened. Now, why? And what we want to do now is look at the, what I'm going to call again, the anatomy of a prophetic word. The components that make up a prophetic word.

The first one is the word revelation. Revelation. We need to understand the source of a prophetic word.

There are obviously three sources of revelation. One is God. That's the one to aim at.

The second one is self. Jeremiah 23, verse 21, I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied. How many of you know that you can prophesy just simply out of your own desire, out of your own sincere desire to see somebody minister to? And many times we do that, you know, when somebody's facing a crisis, even in the pastoral sense, and you know, maybe there's been a car accident, you're in the hospital, and there's a life and death situation there, and you want to encourage.

And so you said, you know, I just believe that God's going to bring you through this. You know, and yet you go back home and you get a call two hours later to say that the person has died. You know, but your

intention is you really want to, you know, it's just that heart of compassion that whelms up and so on.

But in a way you prophesy out of your own spirit. You don't have the mind of God. It's just natural compassion.

You don't want to see that person die. What a tragedy and so on. You value life and so on.

And so, you know, it doesn't always mean that they were, you know, just purposely prophesying, you know, wrongly because they got some sort of kick out of it. I think many times it's, you know, they really didn't want to see something happen, and so they prophesied it. And so the self.

And then, of course, there's satanic sources. The Bible speaks, of course, Matthew 24 and the last days. There'll be false prophets, signs, wonders, miracles, and so on and so forth, all dealing with the supernatural.

One of the major things that Jesus gave as a sign prior to His coming, His second coming, was the fact that there'll be all sorts of spiritual activity. All you've got to do now is turn on the television, see all the psychic hotlines and so on. I mean, this is a day when there's just a deluge of the whole realm of the prophetic, if you like, and I'm using that again in a broad sense.

I forget what the last count was of so-called messiahs in America. It was something like 4,000 messiahs. I mean, literally people that have got their little group, you know, in the mountains of Colorado and New Mexico or whatever.

And, you know, we just had one there in Dallas that, you know, where they expect the Lord to return. When was it? A few weeks ago. And, you know, I mean, there's groups all over.

I mean, there's literally thousands of groups like that. When the cult, what was that cult that committed suicide in California? Heaven's Gate. Hell's Gate.

Heaven's Gate. Yeah, that's a play. Yeah, Heaven's Gate, you know, on Good Morning America, they brought up on the website just hundreds of websites dealing with a whole sort of supernatural realm.

I mean, it's amazing what is out there. We don't understand it because most of the time we're in cloistered within the, you know, the confines of the church and relating one to another and so on. But out there, there is a major resurgence, again, of the supernatural, and that's one of the signs that Jesus said would precede his coming.

Not just wars, rumors of wars, and earthquakes and so on, but signs, wonders, miracles, false prophets, false teachers, and so on. And so those are the three sources we need to determine. First of all, is this from God? That's the first thing.

And there are various ways in which God can speak. Let me just give you some of the various ways there in Numbers 12 and verse 6. It says, here now my words, is there a prophet among you? I, the Lord, will make myself known to him in visions, in dreams, mouth to mouth, in dark sayings, and then Hosea talks about in parables as well. And then you can add to that natural ways in which God speaks.

Jeremiah 18 verse 1, it talks about, go down to the potter's house and there I will speak to you. And God spoke through the natural course of the potter making a vessel, and as Jeremiah looked at the vessel being made, the Spirit of God began to relate, again, the comparison between the natural and the spiritual.

And just as he saw that clay pot being smashed, and he says, you know, I can do that, but I can make another vessel.

I can speak concerning nations just that same way, to build them up or to destroy them, and so on. So there's a variety of ways in which God speaks. Again, through visions, through dreams, mouth to mouth, dark sayings, parables, or through natural means.

Now, I don't understand why God chooses some of these sort of dark sayings. Why doesn't he just, you know, why doesn't he just come out and just say it clearly? Again, those are mysteries concerning the prophetic. You know, I would love it if God, you know, didn't do what we call prophetic symbolism, and so on.

He just, you know, said one is one, and two is two, and three is three, red is red, and yellow is yellow, and so on. But he doesn't. He's, and you know, God does that, and so he's gone.

I'm not going to question it. All right, so the first one is revelation. The second one is interpretation.

Interpretation. There's nine of these, or ten of these. We'll get to them all.

But you see, revelation alone is meaningless without correct interpretation. You can have a revelation and not have an interpretation. And I think there's been numerous prophetic words that have gone, have been judged as false, because of a wrong interpretation.

They've heard something, and they've interpreted it wrongly. Let me give you now some scriptures that I think will help. Acts 10, 9 to 17.

And this is where Peter, you recall, is waiting for lunch, and he's up on the house, decides to have a time of prayer, falls asleep. God redeems the time, and gives him a vision. And in that vision, he sees a sheep coming down with all sorts of unclean animals in it.

And Peter, of course, again, is smart, and he thinks, this is a test. God's seeing if I'm a real Jew or not. You know, no way, Lord.

You know, rise and eat, Peter. And Peter's interpretation is, ah, this is, God's just testing me to see if I'm going to be loyal to the, you know, Old Testament covenant, and so on. The whole dietary law of the Old Testament, and so on.

No way, Lord. I've never, ever, you know, had bacon and eggs for breakfast, or at least the bacon. And you know, I'm not going to do this and that.

And so he says, no way. And finally, he gets the message that maybe something else is in the mind of God. And it says, Peter was greatly perplexed in his mind as to what the vision which he has seen, revelation, might be, interpretation.

Now, let me read that again, so you understand it. Peter was greatly perplexed in his mind as to what the vision which he had seen. He'd definitely seen something.

In fact, three times it had come. But he says, what the vision which he had seen might be. He'd had a vision, but he didn't understand it.

What does this mean? I don't get it. You see, so there was a lack of interpretation. 1 Peter chapter 1, 10 and 11.

And it says there, concerning the prophets who prophesied, concerning Christ, it says, seeking to know, which is the interpretation, what the, what the personal time, the Spirit of Christ within them, was indicating, revelation. In other words, they knew that the Spirit of God was indicating something, but they wanted to know who it spoke about, what personal time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating. So they wanted to know, interpretation, what the Spirit was indicating, revelation.

Zechariah 1, 8 through 9, where he says, I saw revelation at night. And then I said, what are these? This is where Zechariah sees the men riding on red horses and, or a red horse and the various colored horses and so on. He sees something.

He says, I saw in the night vision. And so he had a revelation, but then he says, but what are these? In other words, he saw horses. You know, he didn't know if God was saying, you know, this is a trifecta and, you know, if you bet on these, you know.

I mean, he had no idea. He had just simply seen a revelation. He didn't know if God was saying, listen, go buy yourself a horse.

You know, that donkey of yours isn't going to get much farther. I mean, you know, what, what does it mean? I mean, you have a vision in the middle of night and you see a horse. What does, what does that mean? You know, so rightly he knew that God was saying something.

At least, you know, he said, this isn't a result of pizza the night before. This is, this is a, this is God trying to tell me something. But he says, what are these things? The interpretation.

Daniel 8 and verse 15. I, Daniel, had seen the vision, revelation, and I sought to understand it. Interpretation.

You see, I'd seen a vision, but now I want to know, what does it mean? What does this vision mean? How many of you have had a dream? And I think this afternoon, there's a workshop on, you know, interpreting, I guess, of dreams and so on. You can have a dream, but that doesn't get you very far unless you understand what God is trying to convey to you through that dream. And let's move on.

Another one. Acts 16 and verse 10. This is Paul, the vision of the Macedonian call.

And it says, when he had seen, again, the revelation, or when he had seen the vision, revelation, he concluded interpretation that God had called us. And so, Paul, again, had a understanding, an interpretation of what he had seen. Genesis 40, verse 5 and 10.

These are the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker when Joseph is in prison. And it says, this is the interpretation of it. They came and they said, listen, we've had a dream.

The other guy said, boy, I had a dream last night, too. And so, they had a dream, but they had no idea what the dream represented. They come to Joseph, and Joseph said, this is what the dream means.

And so, there's a interpretation. The same thing in Genesis 41 and verse 25, where God told Pharaoh what he is about to do. Pharaoh had had the dream, you recall, about the seven cows, the skinny ones and the fat ones, and so on.

But he didn't understand. What does this mean? You know, I saw these big, sleek, beautiful cattle, and then the next day, he says, I had another dream, and I saw all these skinny ones. And, you know, what does that mean? Go on a diet? You know, I mean, so he comes to Joseph, and Joseph said, this is what God is about to do.

There's going to be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine, you see. Now, how would you get that out of that? Well, you know, once you know, it makes sense. But apart from that, it doesn't.

You know, you don't know. All right, the third thing, then, is not only that we determine the revelation and the interpretation, but now the application. The application.

I remember Mike Bickle many times sharing that, you know, somebody would come up to him, maybe at the end of a meeting, or in the middle of a meeting, and say, you know, I've just had this tremendous burden for the youth, and I believe God has just laid on my heart the fact that we're supposed to do something for the youth of this church. We're supposed to open a coffee shop, say, or something like that. And Mike would say, you know, they may genuinely have heard from God.

It may have been a revelation from God. They may have the right interpretation that God is wanting to minister to youth, but the wrong application. Their application was, Mike, you need to do something about it.

And Mike's application of it was, no, God gave you the burden. Now, many times we have a wrong application, and we need to understand what is the application. Is it for the pastor to go and open a coffee shop and add to his already heavy schedule, or is it the fact that God is giving you a burden? Or is it the fact that that burden has nothing to do with a coffee shop? It's just the fact that it's an intercessory burden that God has given you to pray and intercede for the youth of this area.

And so, application is important. Let's look in Acts 21 and verse 10. And this is where Paul, or Agabus meets up with Paul, and he has a word for him.

Let me read it to you. Verse 9. Now, this man had four virgin daughters who were prophets, or prophetesses. And, well, verse 10.

And as they were staying there for some days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, this is what the Holy Spirit says. In this way, the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

Now, there we've got a prophetic man who obviously is of a good reputation because they accept him, they embrace him into their particular group. And he takes the belt of Paul, he binds his own hands up, and he says, the Spirit of God says that the man that owns this belt is going to be bound if he goes towards Jerusalem. So, we've already got the revelation.

It's from a prophet of God. We've got the interpretation. We know exactly what's going to happen.

The person's going to be bound if he goes to Jerusalem. But now, what about the application? What does that mean? What would you do if that came to you? Now, notice what they did. Verse 12, and when they heard this, we, as well as the local residents, so the writer of Acts himself, we, as well as the local residents, told him not to go to Jerusalem.

In other words, their application of this was, God is telling you, Paul, don't go to Jerusalem.

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