

# (Gifts) Gift of the Prophet

by Dwight Pentecost

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*The gift of prophet is the ability to receive and communicate a message from God to God's people, and it is a vital part of the Church's ministry.*

**Duration:** 41:04

**Scripture:** Isaiah 1:4, Jeremiah 7:1-23, Ezekiel 3:10, Ezekiel 7:1

**Topics:** "Gifts"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the role of prophets in the Old Testament and their responsibility to communicate God's message to the people of Israel. He highlights the examples of Daniel and Ezekiel, who received visions and revelations from God. The preacher emphasizes that these prophets recognized the origin, authority, and content of the messages they received and understood their duty to relay them to the people. He also mentions Jeremiah, who received the word of the Lord and applied it to the daily conduct of the Israelites. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the importance of prophets as God's messengers and the need for people to heed their words.

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## Transcript

importance to the gift of Apostle is the gift of Prophet. In listing the spiritual gifts in the twelfth chapter of 1st Corinthians and verse 28, the Apostle writes, God has set some in the church, first Apostles, secondarily, or next in importance, Prophets. The same truth is stated again in Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 11.

The ascended Christ in distributing spoils of his victory gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, and some pastor-teachers. We want to consider with you the gift of Prophet. The Prophet was a voice for God, God's spokesman, God's mouthpiece, who received God's message and as God's instrument declared that message to the peoples to whom he had been sent.

The office of Prophet is not a New Testament office. Its roots go back deep into the Old Testament. According to 1st Samuel chapter 9 and verse 9, the one who was called Prophet previously was called a seer.

In verse 9 of 1st Samuel 9, we read, before time in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, come and let us go to the seer. For he that is now called a Prophet was before time called a seer or seer. By that old name, seer, we discover that there were men who were set apart as God's mouthpieces

who brought God's message to the people, and they were able to bring the message because they saw things and heard things that other men did not see and hear.

And when God was communicating his truth to men, and men emphasized the fact that God revealed himself, and there were men who saw and heard what the rest of men did not see and hear, they called them seers. But then as these seers publicly proclaimed the message of God to the people, they came to be known as Prophets. And the word Prophet means to speak for, to proclaim, to herald, to announce.

Now what was evident in the Old Testament that before a man could be God's spokesman, he must receive God's message? There had to be communication from God to the Prophet before there could be any communication from the Prophet to the people. God does speak. God does reveal himself.

God has a message, and he makes that message known. And he provides that men should hear the message that he desires them to hear. And so early in the Old Testament, there were men who were recognized as God's men, men of God, to whom God imparted truth, who in turn relayed and communicated that truth to other men.

When we turn into the Prophet Jeremiah, for instance, it becomes very clear at the outset that this man of God, whom God raised up to deliver a message to Israel concerning judgment to come, first received revelation from God. In Jeremiah 1, verse 1 and 2, the words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiyah, of the priests that were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, and notice these words, to whom the word of the Lord came. Again in verse 4, then the word of the Lord came unto me, Jeremiah says, saying.

If you turn over to the prophecy of Ezekiel, we find the same formula in Ezekiel chapter 7 and verse 1. Moreover, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, these men received a revelation from God. They knew its origin, they knew its authority, they knew its content, and they recognized that they were charged with the responsibility of communicating the message to the people of Israel. After Jeremiah had received a message from God, we read in Jeremiah 23, verse 16, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you, they make you vain.

They speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. There were those men in Israel that claimed to be God's prophets, but they generated and originated their own message, and it had no divine truth in it. It was not by divine authority, it had only the false prophets' authority behind it, and God forbid Israel to listen to these false prophets.

False prophets abounded, and the sign that they were false prophets was that they did not have a word from the Lord, but that didn't mean they kept their mouths shut. They talked anyway. They thought up something to say.

We find in Ezekiel, in chapter 13, the same emphasis made there. The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say unto them that prophesy out of their own heart. Hear ye the word of the Lord.

Thus saith the Lord God, Woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing. They had not seen God as Ezekiel had seen God, and they had not a message from God as Ezekiel had had a message from God. But when Ezekiel came and said, God is going to destroy the city of Jerusalem and carry the people of Israel away into captivity, there were those who rebelled against that message, and they sought out prophets who said, Ezekiel, lie.

God is not going to judge, and God is not going to bring about the captivity of this people. And God warned the people against the false prophets. They were false because they had not had a revelation from God, nor a message from God, but they originated their own message, and as Jeremiah says, they spoke peace when there was no peace.

A man was not God's spokesman unless he knew God, had seen God, had had a revelation from God, and then was commissioned by God to proclaim that message. The first thing we want to point out, then, is in the concept of prophet, is that a prophet receives and has a message from God to communicate to man. The second thing we observe about the prophet, the Old Testament, is that he was commissioned by God to proclaim the revelation which God had given to him.

I'm turning to Jeremiah chapter 1 again, and in verse 7, after a word came from the Lord to Jeremiah, the Lord said unto Jeremiah, Say not I am a child, for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.

Or read it again in the experience of Ezekiel. Unless you think Jeremiah's experience was unique. In Ezekiel chapter 3, I'm reading verse 10 and 11.

After God had revealed himself in that great vision, in Ezekiel chapter 1, the vision of the glory of God, so that Ezekiel was one who had seen what other men do not see. The word of the Lord came unto him, Ezekiel 3.10, saying, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears, and go. Get thee to them of the captivity unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God.

Ezekiel had seen a vision of God's glory, and he had received God's commission, and God said, Go, and say, Thus saith the Lord. The prophet not only received revelation, he was to proclaim the truth that God had revealed to him. I'm turning back to Jeremiah chapter 7, and I find that in proclaiming God's message, the prophet applied God's word to their daily conduct.

The prophet applied God's word to their daily conduct. Jeremiah chapter 7, beginning at verse 1. The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Stand in the gate of the Lord's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah that entered at the gates to worship the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel.

Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor, if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, the widow, shed not innocent blood in the place, neither walk after other gods to their hurt, then will I cause you to dwell in this place, the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever.

But ye trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not, and come and stand before me in this house?" Do you get the force of the prophet's message? The people were coming to worship, they were going to the temple, and they came as tourists and said, Oh, how beautiful the temple is! We'll go in and worship. The prophet stood there to condemn them and say, You are sinners, you are violent, God's

sight, you are unclean, you are guilty of murder and theft and adultery and lying and false worship.

He got just as specific as could possibly be. You see, the prophet's message had to do with declaring the holiness of God and the unholiness of the nation. Turn to the first chapter of Isaiah.

You see the same thing again from another prophet. The prophet Isaiah begins his ministry with words like this in verse 4, Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corruptors, they forsaken the Lord, they provoke the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Verse 11, What is the purpose of the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt offerings of ram, the fat of fed beast, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he goats.

God says he won't accept their sacrifices and their worship, and he invites them, verse 16, Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, come before me, cease to do evil. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. The prophet Isaiah condemned the people because of their sin, their godlessness, their unholiness. He revealed God's divine displeasure upon them, and as God's prophet, he invited them to come and meet with God in order that the sin question might be settled.

These men were God's prophets, and they proclaimed God's message and condemned sin and called sinners to righteousness and faith in God's promise. The prophets did something else, and we sometimes think of this aspect of their ministry as the most important, when really it wasn't. The prophets often predicted the future, and when we think of a prophet, we think of one who foretells.

What I want you to see is that the foretelling or predictive ministry of the prophet was subordinate to his ministry of calling the people to repentance and to faith. When a prophet predicted, he did so to authenticate the message of judgment and to give a people who were under judgment hope. That is why the prophet Isaiah, for instance, said, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.

Speak ye comfortably unto Jerusalem. Tell her that her warfare is accomplished. Then Isaiah goes on and describes the peace that God's Messiah will bring to a people who have had to pass under judgment because of their sin.

I think of the experience of the prophet Daniel in Daniel chapter 7. I'll take this as just one illustration. Daniel was given a vision, and the vision, as I'm sure many of you who have studied prophecy know, was a vision of the four beasts that predicted the four great world empires that in succession would rule over Jerusalem and Judea and God's land. Those four represented by the four beasts were the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman.

And Daniel, in that vision, outlined the future course of history in accurate detail. But then, after he has described the four beasts, he says in verse 9, I beheld till the thrones were cast down, the thrones of Gentile rulers, and the Ancient of Days did sit. And I read in verse 13, I saw in the night visions, and one like the Son of Man came with clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him, the Son of Man, near to him, the Ancient of Days, and that it was given unto him, the Son of Man, dominion and glory and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And here Daniel is describing for us the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as King of Kings

and Lord of Lords to depose every ruler and to subjugate them all to his authority. Now, why that prophecy? You see, Daniel had told in chapter 2 and again in chapter 7 that Jerusalem was to be overthrown and the people of God brought under the sway and control of Gentiles, but there was hope.

God one day would send a deliverer who would overthrow Gentile rulers and would bring Gentile nations under his authority, and the predictive prophecy of Daniel 7 was designed to give peace and comfort and hope to those who were under judgment. Now, there was a test of a prophet, and this was made very clear. I'm turning back to Deuteronomy chapter 18.

Deuteronomy chapter 18, and here God in a message to Moses had promised in verse 15, the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee of thy brethren like unto me, and to him ye shall hearken. And Moses is speaking of the coming of the prophet who had seen the Father and received the Father's word and came to deliver the Father's message to man. But how can we test the genuineness of the prophet? I read verse 18 and 19.

I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing falleth not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him, that is of his message. You see, God made it very clear that a prophet must receive God's message. He must proclaim that message.

That message is to be received by those to whom it is delivered, and a prophet's message can be tested. For if, when he announces what God is going to do, and it doesn't take place, you know that God hasn't said it, nor sent that prophet, you know that that one is a false prophet. Now, when we turn from the Old Testament that has laid the foundation in this basic concept of the prophet, we read that to the Church prophets were to be given.

As we said earlier, second in only to the gift of apostle was the gift of prophet. And in passages concerning spiritual gift, this gift is mentioned most prominently. I'm turning to Ephesians chapter 2, and there is another reference which we had not looked previously concerning the Church.

Ephesians chapter 2. I'll begin reading at verse 19. Ye, by that he means Gentile believers, 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, whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit. That which our Lord prophesied in Matthew 16, I will build my church, began on the day of Pentecost.

And that which was to be the temple of the Holy Spirit in this age must have a foundation. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians, other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 3, 11.

But upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, the first course of building stone is built upon which all the other stones in the temple will rest. And in Ephesians 2, verse 20, Paul tells us that upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, as the foundation for all the other stones, there were the apostles and the prophets. While some would refer prophets here to the Old Testament prophets, in that they spoke of the coming of Christ, I believe that he is speaking here of men who were given as prophets in the New Testament.

What was their ministry? And in the exercise of the gift given to them, what was their function? May I suggest, first of all, these New Testament prophets received revelation from God. Who were these prophets? Primarily, they were the ones who wrote the New Testament scriptures upon which our faith rests. Men like Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John, the Apostle Paul, and Peter, and James.

Some of these men were apostles, but not all of them. Mark was not, Luke was not, James was not, Paul was not. But they received a message from God.

Our Lord, I think, is anticipating this ministry of the prophet. When our Lord said, as recorded in John 16, 13, or verse 12 and 13, I have many things to say unto you now, but you cannot bear them now. You can't assume the responsibility for them.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that is from the Father, he shall speak, that is to you, and he will show you things to come. And when he makes that revelation to you, you will put into scripture what the Spirit reveals.

And our Lord is preparing men who would have the gift of prophecy, and would receive revelation from God, that could be communicated to God's people. Now, when the scriptures were completed, when the New Testament was finished, those who had the gift of prophecy to receive revelation, no longer exercise that portion of the gift. Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy claims to have received revelation, subsequent to, that supersedes the scripture, a lie of the devil.

Mormonism is based on the postulate that God revealed to their prophet, truth, over and above what was given in scripture. And just as men in the Old Testament and in the New Testament received revelation, so the gift of receiving revelation continues to the present day. I think the answer to that is found in what the Apostle John said at the conclusion of the book of the revelation.

In Revelation 22, 18, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city from things which are written in this book. Why? Because God, through those original New Testament prophets, revealed his message, and it was a completed message.

It's a message that centers in Jesus Christ, and it is God's message to man. But those who received revelation were to communicate revelation. I see the Apostle Paul exercising this function of the gift of prophet in a passage such as Acts 20, verse 27, where speaking of his ministry in Ephesus, Paul said, I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Where did Paul get his message? He tells us in Galatians chapter 1 and 2 that he didn't get it from man, and he wasn't taught it by the apostles, nor did he learn it from the church. God revealed himself and his truth to Paul. When Paul received that truth, he was exercising the gift of apostle.

But when he communicated that truth, I'm sorry, I should have said the gift of prophet. Should not. And when he communicated what he had received, he was exercising another portion of the gift of prophet.

And when Paul came to Ephesus, he didn't receive a new special revelation from God for the Ephesians, but he proclaimed the revelation that God had given him. He who was the apostle and established the church at Ephesus was also the prophet, and he proclaimed the message of God to the Ephesians. You see, while there are some aspects of the gift of prophet that functioned only until scripture was completed, there are other aspects of the gift of prophet that go on and on and on.

And any man who gives himself to the book and stands up and says, thus saith the Lord, God is holy, and you are a sinner, and God cannot receive you into his presence, but God has provided a savior. That man is a prophet. We would all agree, I'm sure, that if Billy Graham has any gift, it is a gift of evangelist.

But how many times have you heard Billy Graham stand up and say to America that America has abandoned God and the judgment of God must fall upon this nation unless there is repentance? That's the voice of a prophet crying out God's holiness and God's judgment and inviting men to faith in Jesus Christ to escape God's judgment with a promise, that in that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. That is the exercise of gift of prophet. I cannot receive new revelation from God, but I can proclaim revealed truth that God has already given and have a prophetic voice.

It is primarily the ministry of the prophet to apply the word of God to conduct, to point out the requirements that the word of God puts upon a people or upon an individual. And when God's spokesman cries out against the free sex, the immorality, the adultery of our day, he is a prophet. When he cries out against mass murder, abortion, he is a prophet.

When he condemns a nation for its lawlessness and godlessness, he is a prophet. When he speaks the word of God to national and personal problems, he is God's prophet. One tragedy today is that the church has lost its prophetic voice and is not condemning sin, but rather condoning it.

Where are the prophets today who proclaim the holiness of God, the sinfulness of sin, and announce God's judgment on sin? We're so afraid of offending somebody, we've lost the prophetic voice. The gift of a prophet, then, today is not to receive vision and to hear words and discover new revelation. God has revealed himself through Jesus Christ to the extent that God can be revealed to man.

God has given us an infallible revelation inscriptured for us, but we can proclaim it and use it to solve personal and national problems, to call men to righteousness, to godliness, to escape judgment to come. It's one final word. After we have seen what the gift of prophet entails today, we ask ourselves the question, are those who can predict the future? And I would have to say yes.

Just as false prophets in the Old Testament made predictions that never came true, there still can be those who make predictions. But if one makes predictions of what will come to pass and misses even one prediction, that prophet or prophetess is not from God. If that one made a hundred predictions and got 99 of them right, the world would beat a path to his or probably her door.

But the fact that one was missed brands that person as a false prophet who does not have God's message because God never makes a mistake. And the passage we read in Deuteronomy says there's only one thing to do with a false prophet or prophetess, stoning. God warns about listening to a false prophet.

He puts that responsibility upon believers. And this was so serious in the sight of God, lest Israel should be deceived by false prophets. God said, take that one who because one prophecy failed demonstrates they are false.

Get rid of them. The very moment a person claims to be able to predict the future, whether it is by tea leaves or Ouija board or the stars or by seances or trances or extrasensory perception, I don't care how they claim to be able to do it. You put it down without controversy.

That person is originating their own message and does not have God's message and is no prophet of God. Don't be deceived. Don't be deceived because God has given us all of the future that he has to reveal.

And our ministry as prophets, the exercise of the gift of prophecy is to proclaim what has been revealed so that man might come to know him whom to know right is life eternal. We pray our Father that the spirit of God was given us. The scriptures as his revelation to men might find us diligent in the study of that which has been revealed so that those who doubt us gift as prophets might speak the truth of God in judgment conviction to bring men from darkness to light dismisses with the riches of thy grace and mercy and peace upon us.

We pray in Jesus name.

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