

# (Prophecy) Prophecy in the Old Testament

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding the prophetic ministry in the Old Testament, highlighting the seven ministries of a prophet and the difference between true and false prophets.*

**Duration:** 56:59

**Scripture:** Judges 21:25, 1 Samuel 3:1-9, Matthew 6:33, Colossians 4:6

**Topics:** "False Prophets", "True Prophecy"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker warns against false prophets who take advantage of people by claiming to have private prophecies for them. He emphasizes the need to be cautious and discerning when it comes to these individuals, as they may be seeking money, sex, or power. The speaker highlights that this is not a new phenomenon and references the Old Testament as evidence. He also discusses the different roles and characteristics of prophets, including being a herald, a spokesman of God, a watchman, and a shepherd. The sermon concludes with the message of repentance, drawing inspiration from the ministry of John the Baptist.

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## Transcript

Today we want to continue our study in the subject that we were started yesterday, the truth about prophecy. And we want to look at the Old Testament today, what we're going to do is we'll look at the New Testament tomorrow and then on the last day we'll have the time of questions and answers. So if you remember what I said yesterday, in the Old Testament there were seven words that described the seven ministries that a prophet was supposed to have.

Now the only reason we look at that is so that we get a background understanding of what the prophetic ministry was all about. Now it's very easy if you look up a concordance, you'll discover something that in the Old Testament, the word prophesying is mentioned very little, but prophet comes very often. But when you come to the New Testament, you hardly read the word prophet, especially after the day of Pentecost, where the new covenant begins, but you read more about prophesying.

And there are hardly any prophets mentioned in the New Testament. This is an amazing thing, that you just need a concordance to discover that, but hundreds of them in the Old Testament. So the emphasis in the New Testament is on prophesying and the ministry, but in the Old Testament it was the person of the prophet.

Now whenever people have not understood the new covenant, like most Christians have not understood the new covenant at all, they tend to go back to the Old Testament for everything. One of the clearest proofs is that when Christians don't live a life of victory over sin, it's a clear proof that they are back under the old covenant, because victory over sin was not promised under the old covenant, it's a new covenant promise. It's just one example, I could go to many others, but just that much as an introduction.

So we look at the Old Testament to provide us a background, because in a sense it's these ministries that should characterize all of us, to a greater or lesser measure. We saw yesterday that the new covenant promises that God will pour out his spirit on all mankind, that includes you and me. It's not on a special person here or a special person there.

My dear brothers and sisters, young brothers and sisters, you must seek God with all your heart, that the spirit of God is poured out upon you. You'll never be able to serve God effectively with Bible knowledge, no matter how much you study the Bible, you can spend a hundred years studying the Bible, you will not be able to serve God if the spirit of God is not poured out upon you, and you must claim this, that when the spirit of God is poured out, you, being a son and a daughter of God, will prophesy. So it's with that in the background that we study the subject, it's not theoretical, nothing in the Bible is meant to be theoretical, it's practical, intensely practical.

So everything I say does not apply to some full-time workers or pastors or missionaries, but for every child of God in the new covenant. So what were those seven ministries I mentioned yesterday? First, a prophet is a seer. That's mentioned in 1 Samuel 9 verse 18, he was one who could see, because God gave him discernment.

We need that today, to see the dangers there are if we go in a particular direction, and a prophet needs to warn a church about that. And the second word we saw was a mystic or a man with vision, one who is a worshipper, who lives close to God, who sees the glory of God, and because he lives in God's presence, his spiritual faculties are sharpened to see and have vision concerning the future. And therefore he can direct God's people in the right direction.

So these first two words relate to a man's connection with God. And then the third word was a burden bearer. Prophets carried a burden, a burden which God put upon their heart, and they stuck to that burden till the end of their life, and nobody could remove it.

And when God calls us also, he gives us a particular burden. The fourth word we saw was a herald, or one who proclaims something, and the fifth was one who is a spokesman or a mouthpiece of God. These two relate to speaking forth God's word, and then the last two we saw was a watchman, who stands on the wall and watches for the enemy, and the last one was a shepherd.

So all these ministries were there in the ministry of a prophet to a greater or lesser extent, and as we seek to prophesy to a greater or lesser extent, these things must characterize, all seven must be found in us to some extent. It's not only a pastor who is a shepherd, even a young fifteen year old wholehearted Christian can be a shepherd to a seven year old child. So all these ministries can be found in us.

Now we go to the study of the prophets and prophecy in the Old Testament, and I want to show you something that the first two people who prophesied in the Old Testament, the very first two, were Enoch and Noah. Now the prophecy of Enoch is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but it is mentioned in the book of Jude, in verse 14 and 15, where it says about Enoch prophesying the second coming of Christ. In

Jude, verse 14 and 15, about Christ coming to judge sinners.

So Enoch spoke about judgment upon the ungodly. Now it's very interesting to see this, that the first prophecy mentioned in scripture by a man was a prophecy concerning Jude 15, judgment on the ungodly, for all their ungodly deeds which they have done in their ungodly ways, and the things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. So in Enoch's prophecy, four times he's speaking about ungodly people.

Now that is, generally speaking, the emphasis of all the prophets in the Old Testament and the New Testament. They are hitting out against ungodliness and sin. Please remember this.

The second prophecy is from Noah concerning his son. You know the story where his son Ham came and spoke about his father lying naked, and Noah made a prophecy there in Genesis 9, verse 25, saying, Cursed be Canaan, who was Ham's son. A servant of servants will he be to his brothers, and blessed be the Lord of Shem and Japheth.

And that prophecy was literally fulfilled, showing that Noah was also a prophet. Again, notice this. The prophecy was concerning judgment against sin, the sin of a disrespectful attitude towards his father.

So it's very interesting to see that prophecy begins in the Old Testament with this warning to sinners, not to play the fool with God, but that God would judge them severely for sin. The other thing that we notice about both these men, Enoch and Noah, I don't know whether you've noticed it, that both of them walked with God. It says in Genesis 5, verse 24, that Enoch walked with God, and it says in Genesis 6, verse 9, that Noah walked with God.

Now, the first two people who prophesied and who were prophets in the Old Testament were also people who walked with God. Now that's also significant, that prophecy comes out of a walk with God. This is how prophecy began in the Old Testament, and that's how God intended that it should continue all the way through.

That's not, unfortunately, how it's gone. But if we want to come back to God's original pattern and plan for prophesying, remember, it doesn't begin with predicting the future. No, it begins with walking with God.

Prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and we can compare it to a vessel, say a beautiful glass. But the life which the prophet has as a result of his walk with God is what is inside the glass. So a person can have a fantastic gift of prophecy.

It's like a beautiful glass, and if he doesn't have life, it's empty, there's no water in it. It doesn't satisfy the thirst of somebody who is needy, even though the glass is beautiful. And another person may not have such a fantastic gift of prophecy, but he's got water in the glass, he's got the life of Christ in him, and that man can actually bless people more with an inferior gift of prophecy than the other person with a superior gift of prophecy but who doesn't walk with God.

So that's why these two things must always be balanced, and that's why we see right at the beginning of scripture, the two first prophets walking with God and prophesying. And if you want to do it God's way, that is the way. And that's what we should look for, first of all, in any person who calls himself a prophet.

Do I sense that this man is walking with God? Do I sense that this man is walking with Jesus Christ? How do we know? The more you walk with Christ, the more you become like him. And that is the thing that we should look for. Now having said that, we go to Genesis chapter 20, where we read about the first

reference to the word prophet in the Bible, and there it's God himself saying concerning Abraham, God saying about Abraham, Abraham is a prophet.

Again, what do we see? Abraham was a man of faith. He didn't predict the future, but he was a prophet. So we see that a prophet does not necessarily have to predict the future, but he could be a spokesman for God, speaking forth God's word without necessarily predicting the future.

It's very important to see that. Abraham is called here a prophet. We go now to Exodus chapter 7, verse 1, where we read the second time the word prophet comes in the Bible, and here is where we can really understand what prophet really means.

Because when we think of prophesying, remember this applies to us according to Acts chapter 2, verse 17 and 18, if the Spirit is poured upon us. Here is what it means to prophesy. Here is what it means to be a prophet.

It's interesting, this is not referring to a prophet of God, but a prophet of Moses. Exodus chapter 7, verse 1, the Lord said to Moses, I am going to make you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. And there we understand what the meaning of prophet is.

You shall speak all that I command you, in other words, he would tell Aaron, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh. So you see a prophet is someone who is a spokesman for somebody else. Because Moses went up to God and said, oh I can't speak God, I don't have any ability, he said that in chapter 4, and God said, okay, Aaron will be your prophet.

He will speak, you tell him what to speak. So what is a prophet? A prophet is not necessarily somebody predicting the future. It's a wrong understanding that a lot of people have.

That the only person who is a prophet is someone who predicts the future. It's someone who is speaking forth on behalf of somebody else. We will see that more when we come into the New Testament, where there is very little of predicting the future.

99% of New Testament prophecy relates to speaking forth the word of God. Telling people what God is saying, not predicting the future. A lot of Old Testament prophecy was predicting the future, concerning the coming of Christ, concerning the judgment of the nations, etc.

But not all. In fact the greatest prophet of all, do you know who that was in the Old Testament period? It was John the Baptist. He lived under the old covenant.

Remember the new covenant began on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2. And up until that time, the greatest prophet, Jesus himself said, born of women, was John the Baptist. The greatest prophet of all time. He did not predict one thing about the future.

But he spoke forth God's word. And what was the message of the greatest prophet of all time? John the Baptist. Repentance.

Do you see that? How in the Old Testament began with Enoch preaching to ungodly sinners to repent lest God judge them. And ends with John the Baptist preaching repentance to sinners so that they can turn to him. The burden of the prophets throughout the Old Testament was holiness, holiness, holiness.

Not prosperity. Prosperity was promised to the Israelites in the Old Covenant. It's not promised to the Christians in the New Covenant.

But it was promised to the Israelites under the Old Covenant. But it was contingent on their repenting and turning to God. And the false prophets were the ones who offered Israel peace and prosperity without their being holy.

That's one of the ways we can distinguish a false prophet from a true prophet. A true prophet emphasizes holiness, repentance, turning from sin, God's judgment on ungodliness. A false prophet emphasizes prosperity.

And it doesn't really matter how you live. God wants to bless you materially. It's right through the Old Testament.

And that's why if we see this clearly in the Old Testament we'll be protected from the multitudes of false prophets that are roaming around in Christendom today. Now let's turn to Numbers chapter 22. What I'm going to do is take you through the Old Testament and show you some of the important things in relation to prophecy that we find in the Old Testament.

In Numbers chapter 22 we read of another prophet. And this is Balaam. It's interesting.

Balaam was a prophet. And if you read his prophecy in Numbers chapter 23 and 24, you know, Balaam, I told you yesterday, predicted the coming of Jesus Christ. You read that in Numbers 24, 17.

A star will come from Jacob. Balaam was a man who predicted the coming of Christ. One of the first prophets in the Old Testament to predict the coming of Christ was a man who went after money.

So just because a man says something which is going to be fulfilled, it does not mean he's a man who's accepted by God. Isaiah predicted the coming of Christ. Balaam predicted the coming of Christ.

Isaiah went to heaven. Balaam went to hell. If you needed advice, whom would you go to? Isaiah or Balaam? There are Isaiahs and Balaams in the world today.

Be careful. Just because something happens, everything that Balaam said about Israel was true. But notice what it says about him in Numbers chapter 22 and verse 7. When Balak, the king of Moab, wanted Balaam to come and prophesy against Israel, it says he sent the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian.

And notice this, with the fees for divination. Divination is another word for witchcraft. A lot of people who were involved in Old Testament prophesying, the false prophets especially, were very closely linked with witchcraft.

They didn't know which spirit was operating on them. You see, it's not just the Holy Spirit who knows about your past life. The devil knows every detail about your past life.

He's got enough demons floating around the world to know the exact details of someone's past life. So someone possessed with a demon could tell you every detail about your past life, not knowing anything about you, and you'd think that man is a prophet. He's not a prophet.

He could be possessed with a demon. In fact, some years ago I read in the newspaper about a small baby born somewhere in North India, and when she began to speak, she spoke, speaking about her past life as

an old lady who died in some other part of India the same day when she was born. And there were people who, she was a Hindu girl, and they said this is the proof of reincarnation.

That when a soul dies, it's born back into the world. And they said, here is the proof. This little girl says every little detail about a thousand miles away where some old lady who died when she was over eighty years old, every little detail of that life.

Now a person who doesn't know about demons and about the devil would be absolutely surprised. And that sounds like a real proof of reincarnation. I mean, as soon as I read it, I knew that's just a demon.

A demon got into that girl and knowing all the details of that other person's life, describes it. Now I'm surprised that Christians are fooled by this type of people coming forth and saying something about your past or some detail about your life and you wonder how in the world did that person know. Don't imagine that that's always from God.

So that's just a warning. Divination. The point I want you to notice here is, King knew that if I want to get Balaam to prophesy, I've got to give him money.

Notice how money comes in straight away right at the beginning of the Bible with false prophets. That's why I told you yesterday, it's by a person's attitude to money that you discover whether he's a true prophet or not. It's a fundamental point.

And that's why the early apostles warned people that if a man is interested in money, he can never be a true prophet of God. I have followed that rule literally, totally, and I have never once in my life been deceived or disappointed. It's absolutely true because Jesus said there are only two masters in the world, Luke 16, 13, God and money.

A true prophet serves God, a false prophet is interested in money. And haven't you seen pastors and prophets claiming to be Christians, quoting the Bible, interested in money? I'm amazed that people who read the Bible can be fooled by such people. Remember, Balaam prophesied everything correctly, including the coming of Christ, but he wanted a salary for his services.

And the king knew that. And when he didn't come first, the king knew, well, if I offer him a higher salary, he will come. And he went with more money.

And that's exactly how a lot of people, Christian organizations are drawing people, well, I'll offer you a higher salary if you don't come for the first salary I offer. Where did it start? Balaam is the first example of it in the Old Testament. And he was a false prophet.

That's not Christianity. Jesus didn't offer a salary to Peter and James and John when he called them to serve him. There's tremendous amount of deception, but if you can keep this one thing in mind, is this guy interested in money, then he's a false prophet.

As far as I'm concerned, I would write him off immediately as a false prophet. So we see, they recognize that. In fact, in the Old Testament, we read another example in the book of Judges, chapter 17, where a man wanted a priest.

And he said, come and be a priest in my house and I'll give you so much salary, I'll give you a change of clothes. And the guy came. Examples of this in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, Balaam is

mentioned a number of times.

Peter says in 2nd Peter 2.15 about the madness of Balaam. What is the madness of Balaam? This man who prophesied about the coming of Christ. His madness was that he ran after money.

And it also says at 2nd Peter 2, verse 15 and 16. In the book of Jude, we read about the error of Balaam. In Revelation chapter 2, verse 14, we read about the doctrine of Balaam.

So we see, Balaam is mentioned in the New Testament as a warning to New Testament people who seek to prophesy. Yes, you can prophesy when the Spirit comes upon you, but remember Balaam, and don't become spiritually mad like he was. Now we go to Deuteronomy chapter 13.

In Deuteronomy chapter 13 and verse 2, let's start with verse 1. If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true. Now you see, as soon as that happens, a sign or a wonder comes true, most Christians would immediately swallow it, provided the man calls himself a Christian. Now this is not talking about some heathen religion.

It says here, arises among you. That means there's a man there who accepts the law of Moses, he was an Israelite, worshipping the true God, and he speaks of a sign and a wonder. Now if a non-Christian man did it, we would all reject him.

But what if a Christian came and did a miracle in the name of Jesus, prophesied in the name of Jesus? This is referring to such a case. And gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true concerning which he spoke to you, but he says, let us go after other gods, and let us serve them. You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams.

I told you there are only two gods, God and money. So when you have a prophet arising among you, saying something and it works, his sign comes true, or the miracle takes place, or the words he speaks comes true, and then you find he's interested in money, or he tells you how you can make more money, how you can get a better car or a better house. That's another God.

That's not what Jesus came. Jesus came to lead us to worship the true and living God, our Father in heaven. But when he leads you in another direction, remember always this, what Jesus said, there are only two masters in the world, Luke 16, 13, God and money.

Nobody will ask you to serve the devil. Jesus did not say the two masters were God and Satan. That's the mistake we make, and that's why we go astray.

Babylon, that you read off in the Old Testament, you read chapter 17 and chapter 18 of Revelation together, you find that Babylon is not serving the devil. Babylon is an economic religious system. Chapter 18 is describing Babylon as an economic system and 17 as a religious system, and it's the combination of the two.

It's the combination of Christianity plus money that produces Babylon. Jerusalem, that's why Babylon is called great 11 times in the book of Revelation, and Jerusalem is called holy. The true church is holy.

It's not rich, it's holy. And that's the primary characteristic of true Christianity. So here we see a prophet leads us to be interested in materialism, in material things, and how we can get this and how we can get that.

And the devil knows that everybody in the world loves money, unless Jesus delivers us from it. You shall not listen to the words of that prophet. How many Christians obey that? Why does God allow such a false prophet to come into the midst of his people? Listen to this.

This is the verse that tells us why God permits it. It's exactly like the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden. Why did God place that tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden? You know the answer.

To test. Even Jesus needed to be tested in the wilderness. How much more you and I. Do you know how God, he tests us through many ways.

One of the ways he tests Christians today and he tested the Israelites in the Old Testament was by allowing false prophets to come into their midst to see what are these people really interested in. Are they interested in me or are they interested in money? And so the false prophet comes and it says here in verse 3, the Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul or whether you love the Lord your God in a little corner of your heart and most of your heart is interested in a comfortable life and in money and things like that. I tell you there's nobody who can find that out in your life like a false prophet.

He comes along and he prophesies some material gain for you and God immediately finds out the condition of your heart. So there we are told Christianity is a supernatural religion. I believe that.

We have to experience supernatural answers to prayer in our life. Particularly after we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We enter the realm of the supernatural.

But everything supernatural is not from God. Please remember that. And here is an example where it is shown that the miraculous is often used by God to test his people.

People who come in the name of Jesus can do miracles but they may be workers of iniquity as I said yesterday. Now we go to Deuteronomy chapter 18 and verse this is speaking about a true prophet in verse 20 and 22. The prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in my name which I have not commanded him to speak or which he shall speak in the name of other gods that prophet shall die.

A prophet may speak in the name of Jehovah or Yahweh in the name of the Lord but if he speaks what the Lord has not told him to speak. It was such a serious sin in the Old Testament that the prophet had to be killed. You couldn't play the fool.

You couldn't say well I think what I'm saying is from the Lord. There are a whole lot of people today trying to learn how to prophesy. There are a lot of people going around teaching people how to prophesy.

I heard recently of a meeting where people sit together and they are told whatever comes into your mind just say it. That's a prophecy. Imagine if you were in the Old Testament they'd kill you.

It's a good thing you're not in the Old Testament. It says imagine if a prophet presumptuously seeks to speak in my name saying thus said the Lord and you say whatever comes into your mind. According to that Old Testament law you've got to be killed.

You know the trouble today is God's people don't fear him. I don't believe in saying thus said the Lord unless it's a word from scripture. That I can say.

Thus said the Lord. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved. Sure.

We can be absolutely clear when we are quoting scripture which is the word of God but if you are presumptuous to say something which God Almighty has not commanded you to say. My brother, sister, you better be careful. We're supposed to fear God in the New Covenant more than in the Old Covenant.

Why? Because we have a greater revelation of God in Christ than they had in the Old Covenant. And so here is something that should bring a real fear into our heart about presuming to speak something. In the New Testament the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 7 number of places he says concerning this matter I have no commandment from the Lord but I give my opinion.

And at the end of the chapter in the last verse of 1 Corinthians 7 he says I think I have the spirit of God. I would any day trust such a man than all these multitudes of people going around saying thus said the Lord. Humbugs.

Be careful. Don't be deceived. The other thing we read about a prophet here is verse 22.

You may say in your heart verse 21 how shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken? How do we know whether this man is from the Lord or not? Here is the answer. When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously.

You shall not be afraid of him. Do you know what that means in practical terms? If I say it's going to rain tomorrow, that doesn't make me a prophet. I hope you know that.

Or if I say there will be sunshine the day after tomorrow, that doesn't make me a prophet just because the sun shines. There is a high degree of probability that it might rain tomorrow. The sun may shine the day after tomorrow.

We have to not be deceived by people who say generalised things like that. But the meaning of this is if a man says a hundred things in the name of the Lord and if one of them does not come to pass, he is a false prophet. You got it? If one out of the hundred things he said did not come to pass, as far as I am concerned, he is a totally false prophet.

Why do I say that? Every true prophet in the Old Testament said so many things. Think of the things they said concerning Jesus Christ, the prophecies. Every one of them was fulfilled right down to the last detail.

There is not a single thing that was not fulfilled. There are verses in the Bible that say that not one thing which the Lord promised was not fulfilled. Moses was a true prophet.

Isaiah was a true prophet. Every single jot and tittle of everything they said was fulfilled. That's the mark of a true prophet.

Please remember that. I am absolutely amazed at the number of Christians who either have not studied the Bible or they have no respect for the Bible, who just swallow what people say and imagine that people who say things which are not fulfilled are still true prophets of God. Be careful about what you say.

We can't afford to be in error in prophecy. It's not like the gift of healing. In the gift of healing, if you pray for a hundred people and one of them only is healed, like in many people with healing ministries, they pray for a hundred people, the percentage success rate is about one percent.

One person is healed. Okay. But he has not done any harm to the other ninety-nine percent.

I mean, they didn't get more sick after he prayed for them. Okay, he prayed for a hundred people. One person was healed.

Thank God at least one person was healed. Ninety-nine percent were not healed. But think of prophecy.

Supposing a man goes around prophesying to a hundred people. Now thus said the Lord, you must marry so and so. Or thus said the Lord, you must leave your job and go here.

Or thus said the Lord, this is what the Lord is supposed to do. And a hundred cases, ninety-nine times he is wrong. Can you imagine the confusion and chaos and destruction he has brought into ninety-nine percent of people? It's not in the same category as healing.

In prophecy, the success rate has got to be one hundred percent. It's very, very important. And that's why, in the beginning, I would say, stick to the word of God.

I'm amazed that so many people who want to prophesy don't read the Bible carefully. How in the world can you prophesy if you don't read the scriptures? Here is something which is definitely God's word. Okay, we move on to 1 Samuel chapter 3. Here we read of Samuel as a little boy.

You know, it's amazing that in the Old Testament there were little boys who were prophets, there were farmers, there were kings, all types of people who were prophets. And here we read that in those days, 1 Samuel 3.1, the word from the Lord was rare and visions of God were infrequent. That means there was no man who was living close enough to God, who was interested in God.

It says in the book of Judges, there was no king in Israel. Everybody did what was right in his own eyes. But in the midst of it, there was this little boy who grew up, who had a very young age.

He began to have a hunger for God. And the Lord spoke to him. And he said, speak Lord, your servant is listening.

Speak Lord, your servant is listening. 1 Samuel 3.9, this is the attitude of a true prophet. He lives before God's face every day and he's listening, listening, listening, listening.

It says about Jesus in Isaiah 50 verse 4, the Lord God has opened my ear to listen, to listen, to listen. Every morning, every day, God woke him up to listen. This is how a true prophet must be, listening.

And then he says, because I got a word from my father, Isaiah 50 verse 4, I could give a word to the weary person who came across my path that day, who needed that word. You know what a tremendous privilege it is to prophesy like this. Who knows that tomorrow, some weary person, and the world is full of weary people, may come to you.

You may never stand in a pulpit in all your life, but some weary person may come to you. And if you have had the habit of listening, listening, listening, you can be one who prophesies. You may not be a prophet or a prophetess, but you can prophesy to that person.

What does that mean? Like Aaron spoke what Moses told him, that's what the Hebrew Nabi, which is used in some Indian languages too, prophet, speaks forth what God spoke to you. And that's exactly the word that he needs to encourage him and lift his spirit. I believe all of us can develop this habit, and if we allow

the Spirit of God to rest upon us and fill us, we can prophesy almost every day of our life.

Okay, so we read here of Samuel, and one amazing word. I remember this word challenged me tremendously when I was a young man, in my early twenties, and I started preaching God's word. And I read this verse in 1 Samuel 3, 19, where it says, Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him.

This is the mark of a person who is listening to God. God is with him. And God did not allow any of Samuel's words to fall to the ground.

That means if Samuel spoke 25 words in a sentence to somebody, all 25 words went straight home to the person's heart. My brothers and sisters, that's how we should speak. Let your conversation be always with grace, that you know exactly how to give an answer to everyone who comes to you.

I believe that's how we should preach from the pulpit, where not a single word is wasted. Every word goes straight home to people's hearts. Whether you speak for 5 minutes or 50 minutes, that it must go home to people's hearts.

We must seek to prophesy like that, in personal conversation, in the pulpit, everywhere. Because in this new covenant age, God's sons and daughters are called to prophesy. Make this your goal.

I want to show you another verse in chapter 9. Here we read about Saul looking for his donkeys, and he couldn't find them. Then his servant said, we read here in verse 6, he said to him, behold now there's a man of God in this city, and he's referring to Samuel. He said, let's go to Samuel, and he'll probably tell us where the donkeys are.

And then Saul said in verse 7, how can we go and see this man of God, because, verse 7 last part, we don't have any gifts to give him. See, this is the concept people had in the mind. If I go to a prophet, I must give him money.

If a pastor comes to my house, I must have my envelope ready with some money inside to give it to him. This is Balaam. This is all the doctrine of Balaam.

Don't be deceived by it. Anyway, they said, okay, we'll take something and go to him. And notice what happened.

When they went with this gift, there's no record that Samuel ever took this gift from Saul, but when Saul met Samuel, Samuel anointed him. We read there. And then, what did Samuel do? It says here, Samuel gave him a gift.

He said in verse 23, bring the portion which I said to you to set aside. And the king took up the big leg which was there and set it before Saul and said, here, this is reserved for you. I have come to give you a gift.

This is how these Old Testament prophets were. They gave a gift to the person whom they served. You read how Elisha, when Naaman wanted to give him a gift, Elisha said, no, I don't want any gift from you.

Their attitude to money and to gifts identified the true men of God in these Old Testament times, and that's a very, very important principle to bear in mind. Now, another example I want to show you is concerning musical ministry in prophecy. In 2 Kings chapter 3, when Elisha was called by the king to prophesy concerning a difficult situation they were facing in relation to the enemy, Elisha said, bring me a minstrel.

2 Kings 3.15, and it says, when the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord came upon him. There we see the tremendous power of spiritual music. There is music which is worldly, which has also come into the church, and there is music which lifts the congregation into the presence of God.

And a man who stands there and has to prophesy gets a word from the Lord. This has happened to me numerous times, I cannot even count the number of times where spiritually inspired music has lifted me into the presence of God and given me a word for His people. And I want to show you another verse in 1 Chronicles chapter 25, in this connection, so that people who have the gift of music need not feel that prophecy is only through speaking.

1 Chronicles chapter 25 verse 1, it says, David and the commanders of the army set apart for the service of God some of the sons of Esau, who wrote some of the Psalms, and Heman, who were to prophesy with lyres and harps and cymbals. Now how do you prophesy with guitars and musical instruments? It's amazing. That's how they were to prophesy.

They were to sing prophecies, encouraging God's people. So it's not just, you know, talking about the future. There's a lovely verse in 1 Samuel chapter 10, which I often quote to people as a word which can happen to you in this new covenant age in its fuller fulfillment when the Spirit of God comes upon you.

1 Samuel 10 verse 6, it says, the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you mightily, Samuel told Saul, and you will prophesy. That means you'll have a gift to serve God. And secondly, you will be changed into another man.

Your whole outlook on life will become different. The things of eternity will become more important to you than the things of time. This is what the baptism in the Holy Spirit does.

And then thirdly, verse 7, God will be with you. So when the Spirit of God comes upon me, His purpose is to change me into another man. His purpose is that God's presence will be with me.

And then I prophesy. Now, I want to show you an example of how the same King Saul who had that experience, see what happened to him later on in life when he backslid. At that time, the Spirit of God came upon him.

He began to prophesy. God was with him. He was changed into another man.

But years later, you read in 1 Samuel chapter 19, the same book, 1 Samuel chapter 19 and verse 23 and 24, Saul is in a very backslidden state now and evil spirit has gone into him, but he still prophesies. And it says here that Saul went in 1 Samuel 19 verse 23 and the Spirit of God came upon him and he went along prophesying and he stripped off, this is King Saul, stripped off his clothes, verse 24, and he lay down naked all day and all night. You know, it's possible for a man to have a gift and not have grace.

A gift that God gave him at a time when he was walking with God, but which he loses when he stops walking with God, and the number one example of that is Satan. You know that Satan has got supernatural gifts. When did he get it? Definitely not after he became Satan.

He got it when he was a pure angel. God gave him certain supernatural abilities, but at that time he also had the anointing and grace. When he fell away from God, he lost the anointing, he lost the grace, but he still had the gifts.

You need to distinguish between gifts and anointing. Jesus had anointing and supernatural gifts and grace. Satan has supernatural gifts, but no anointing, no grace.

Here we see Saul, an example of that, a man who once had grace, not grace, but God walked with him, and now he's still prophesying and doing stupid things like taking off his clothes and lying down naked, proving that God was not with him at all. The Old Testament prophets were people who lived before God's face, like Elijah said, I stand before God. Some of them had miraculous power, like Elijah, Elisha.

Some of them never did a single miracle. We read in John's Gospel in chapter 10, verse 41, that John the Baptist, the greatest prophet of the entire Old Covenant period, John 10, verse 41 says, he did not do a single miracle. Is it possible that there can be a prophet who never does a miracle in his whole life? Well, the greatest prophet of Old Testament times, greater than Moses, greater than Elijah, greater than Elisha, never did a miracle.

All he did was preach repentance. Jesus had discernment to know that a man who preached repentance was greater than a man who did miracles. The question is whether you and I have that discernment.

That's why Jesus called John the Baptist, the man who never did a miracle, the greatest prophet of Old Testament times. But there was one thing characteristic of all prophets, true prophets. They had a very simple lifestyle, whether it was Elisha, or Elijah, or John the Baptist, or anyone, or Jesus himself, or Paul, or Peter.

One thing that was characteristic of all the prophets in Old Testament and New Testament, their lifestyle was very simple. Concerning food, concerning clothing, they knew how to fast. It's not that they didn't enjoy a good meal, but they were not slaves to food.

They were not slaves to a particular type of clothing. They were not slaves to comfort. They lived disciplined lives.

That is God's will for every one of us if we want to be effective in God's service. So that's something else that we must bear in mind. Then I want to show you another verse in Jeremiah, which shows us something which we can understand in the New Covenant too.

Jeremiah 1, verse 5. The Lord said to Jeremiah, before you were born, I appointed you a prophet. Do all of you know that before you were born, God knew that one day, many years later, you would accept Christ? And what you would do, whether you would surrender everything to Him, or whether you would be half-hearted like many other Christians, God knew that. And if He saw that you would love Him with all your heart, and you would be a student of His word, and you would give yourself to Him completely, He would have a plan for your life.

In Jeremiah's case, it was to be a prophet. In Paul's case, it was to be an apostle. But it's a tremendous encouragement to know that the gift that God has for me in the body of Christ is not something He decides on after I'm grown up.

Before I was conceived in my mother's womb, God had a plan for me. In the Bible it says in Ephesians, before the foundation of the world. It's a wonderful thing to know that.

So you just need to enter into that. Now I'll tell you what is God's plan for all of you. That the Holy Spirit should be poured out upon you, on all mankind, on all those who will be open, so that we can prophesy,

we can speak forth what God wants us to speak forth.

Just one or two things more before I close. There are a number of examples in the New Testament where we read about, I'll just show you one of them, about false prophets who would preach according to whether people gave them money or not. In the Old Testament, Micah, chapter 3, verse 5. Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray.

When they are given something to eat, they say, peace upon you, God bless you. But those who don't put anything in their mouths, they declare holy war. Have you met prophets like that? Another paraphrase says, those who give them something to eat, they say, God bless you, and those who don't give them something, they say, God damn you.

So, we see, if you read through the Old Testament and these passages, there are some wonderful passages. Let me suggest you two passages in the Old Testament that particularly speak about true prophets and false prophets. Jeremiah chapter 23.

I don't have time to go through it in detail, but that's a chapter really worth reading. And Ezekiel chapter 13. Jeremiah chapter 23 and Ezekiel chapter 13, where we read about how prophets committed adultery.

How does a prophet commit adultery? By getting power over a woman through his preaching. And the woman begins to admire this great man of God who is preaching so powerfully. And then this prophet begins to realize that this woman is admiring him.

And he begins to get close to her, and maybe goes to her and says, I've got a prophecy for you. And it ends up in adultery. You read there about Old Testament prophets who did that in Jeremiah 23.

In fact, the Lord says, your prophets are committing adultery, your prophets are running after money. It's all there in the Old Testament. So that's why I say, be careful.

Be careful about a man who is not preaching holiness, who is not preaching repentance. Be careful about someone who wants to get close to you physically or sexually. Sisters, be extremely careful.

There are many, many false prophets who go around telling you that they've got private prophecies for you and all they want to do is take advantage over you. Take advantage of you and grab something from you. In Zephaniah chapter 3 verse 4, that's the last verse I'll read.

In Zephaniah chapter 3 verse 4, there's a new paraphrase of the Bible called the message Bible. And that translates Zephaniah chapter 3 verse 4 like this. These prophets are opportunists who are out for what they can get from you.

Be careful of prophets who are opportunists, who are out to see what they can get from you. It could be money, it could be sex, usually one of these two things, or some power over you. Be careful, these are not new, this is not something that is new to Christendom today.

It's all there in the Old Testament. We could go through a study of this for many hours, but we don't have time. Be warned, God has given us his word to guide us and protect us.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Let's pray.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/12/SID12062.mp3>

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