

# PROPHECY

Matthew 16:21-23; Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Cor 14:1-5.

## INTRODUCTION

- Illustration about Bible study and “prophecy” about man in my Bible Study.
  - **What is your reaction to a story like this? How do you respond to a “prophecy” like this?**
  - Some of you believe the prophecy is *only* about telling the future.
  - Some of you have been wounded from the misuse of prophecy or spiritual gifts in your church.
    - God is desiring to give us a biblical picture of how the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a way that brings encouragement and consolation.
- Big Idea: **Prophecy is the revelation of God - it pulls back the curtain to allow us to see God more clearly.**
  - **Billboard (Answer Three Questions):** 1) What is Prophecy? 2) Why do we need prophecy? 3) How is prophecy used today?

## QUESTION #1 – WHAT IS PROPHECY?

- Start with Matthew 16:21-23
  - **Prophecy is the revelation of God - it pulls back the curtain to allow us to see God more clearly.**
  - Jesus begins to pull back the curtain on the plan of salvation—his death and resurrection and Peter did not like it.
- Explain Prophet, Priest and King from OT, Christ, and NT / Consummation.
  - **Old Testament:**
    - **Prophet** - Primary function was to serve as God’s representative or ambassador by communicating God’s word to his people. Prophets rebuked sin, proclaimed mercy to the crushed, and interpreted events of the past, present, and future.
      - They never spoke on their own authority but rather delivered the message of God himself gave them. Ex. 4:12, “Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say...” Then for Jeremiah, “The Lord said to Jeremiah, ‘I have put my words in your mouth.’” (Jer. 1:9). Prophetic ministry was not restricted to men. Moses’ sister Miriam is called a “prophet,” as is Deborah (Judges 4:4).
    - **Priest** - Functioned as representatives of the people, offering gifts of sacrifice for sins on behalf of men in relation to God. The Priests also stood as mediators between man and God.
    - **King** - Functioned in the realm of exercising judicial power in the civil realm and were often times military figures who led military campaigns. Kings like David established a dynasty that lasted for over four hundred years.

○ **Christ / New Testament:**

▪ **Prophet – As Prophet, Jesus pronounced an end to all our sin.**

- In the Old Testament, the prophet was the mouthpiece of God to the people. In fact, the prophet often prefaced his words by saying, “Thus says the Lord.” As God’s mouthpiece, the prophet spoke the words of indictment against the people for their sin (Isa. 1:4) and called them to repentance (v. 18). The prophet pronounced the forgiveness and pardon of God (Isa. 40:1–2). Jesus, as the final and sufficient Prophet, has done all of these for us.

▪ **Priest – As Priest, Jesus offered Himself as the sacrifice for all our sin.**

- In the Old Testament, the high priest was the mediator between the holy God and His sinful people. As mediator, the high priest entered the Holy Place and offered a sacrifice to God on behalf of the people once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:34). He sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the mercy seat “because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins” (Lev. 16:16). This he did year after year after year. Christ, as our Mediator and High Priest, not only *offered* the sacrifice (once and for all), but He *is* the sacrifice.

○ Reference Hebrew 9:11-14.

▪ **King - As King, Jesus rules in such a way as not to allow sin to reign over us any longer.**

- In the Old Testament, the monarchy was established for the peace, prosperity, and welfare of the nation. The prototype king was David. No king was ever as beloved as he was. He was God’s viceregent among the people. However, we have a King greater than David. Christ came in the line of David as David’s son and yet also as David’s Lord (Matt. 22:42–45). He rules with perfect justice and equity. As our King, He has fought our battles and now rules in such a way that sin never can reign over us (Rom. 6:7–14).

○ **Church Age / Consummation:**

- Now these things get experienced and we get to taste the ministry of Christ through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and will one day be experienced in the full presence of God. *Some of these gifts will overlap into the other categories.*
  - **Prophet: Prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, tongues, teachers.**
  - **Priest: Faith, miracles, healings, mercy, serving.**
  - **Kings: Apostleship, administration, leadership, pastoral role.**

- Return to Matthew 16 with the Gospel Piece
  - In the person and work of Jesus exists all three offices—The King lays down his crown to be sent as the prophet who reveals our need for redemption while serving as our priest for atonement.
  - Definition: **Prophecy is the revelation of God - it pulls back the curtain to allow us to see God more clearly.**

## QUESTION #2 – WHY DO WE NEED PROPHECY?

- We see our need for a Savior and we see that Jesus is God.
  - Read Matthew 16:13-17.
- We see who we are as the redeemed.
  - Read Ephesians 1:3-14
    - This sets the background for the rest of Ephesians. *This is who you are Christian—chosen, blessed, loved, called, redeemed.*
- We see how we join in the redemption story.
  - Read Ephesians 4:11-12.
    - The word *equip* connotes, “perfecting what is lacking in the faith of Christians,” for the purpose of the work of the ministry.
      - Equip: **“to make someone completely adequate or sufficient for something”**
        - It is implied then from verse 7 that every Christian *has a work of ministry, a spiritual task and function in the body.*
        - All of this is done *for the building up the body of Christ—* the church is increased (new converts) and built up (edification of Christians) so that the church continues to grow into maturity.
    - When the Lord saves—he always does so for a purpose. Prophecy therefore serves the purpose of equipping you for the work of ministry. Election, therefore, is not simply about you—it is about the mission of God in the world.
      - Reference Abraham leaving his country *so that he will be a blessing.*

## QUESTION #3 – HOW IS PROPHECY USED TODAY?

- In the person and work of Jesus, the *office* of the Prophet was fulfilled. Nevertheless, God still equips his body with various *prophetically typed gifts* for the edification of his body unto maturity.
  - **As we jump into how prophecy is used today, it must be understood that New Testament prophecy functions differently than OT prophecy. OT prophecy primarily functioned as Scripture (thus says the Lord), while NT prophecy is less authoritative in a Scriptural sense.**
- Read 1 Corinthians 14:1
  - God is calling us a body to *earnestly desire* the spiritual gifts, *especially that we may prophecy.*

- **Definition: Prophecy is a message in human words usually made to the gathered believers based on personal revelation from the Holy Spirit for the purpose of edification, encouragement, consolation, conviction or guidance but not necessarily free from a mixture of human error, and thus needing assessment on the basis of the Biblical teaching and mature spiritual wisdom.**
- Helpful guidelines for prophecy before jumping into the specific gifts:
  - Most prophecy is going to be in the “ordinary” category rather than “extraordinary.”
    - **Ordinary: As I’ve preached or taught, several have come up to me and said, “Have you been reading my emails? Were you in our car this morning?” Meaning that the Holy Spirit used my words as prophetic power into someones life.**
    - **Extraordinary – Illustration about Piper preaching about Small Groups.**
  - Prophecy should be a *gift* to someone rather than a demand.
    - **Piper Illustration about woman coming to him about Noel’s death.**
    - **When approaching others with a word of prophecy, always use the phrase, “I’m getting the sense...”**
- Application of 3-4 gifts from Equipped to Serve booklet.
  - **Prophecy** - revealing God’s truth to reach the lost or build up the body
    - “Prophecy amounts to healthy preaching, proclamation, or teaching which is pastorally applied for the appropriation of gospel truth and gospel promise, in their own context of situation, to help others.” - Anthony Thiselton
      - **Illustration about sending book quotes or asking for prayer for someone in the “right moment.”**
  - **Teaching** - Teaching the Word to cause greater Christlikeness in the body
    - **Jay Sklar illustration.**
    - **1 Cor 14:1-3**
      - “The one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.”
    - **Ephesians 4:11-14** - the *purpose* of the gifts are edification, encouragement and consolation unto Christian maturity.
  - **Evangelism** – A person has a unique ability to communicate the gospel so unbelievers often believe in Jesus.
- **Return to Matthew 16:21-23**
  - Why do our hearts want to shut down prophecy? Why does Jesus rebuke Peter?
    - There is pride from Peter in thinking that he knows better than Jesus.
    - Peter had just confessed Jesus as the Christ and then turned around and *actually rebuked Jesus* because Peter had different expectations.

- How do you come to Jesus and “rebuke” him? How do you approach God wanting to correct the way he does things?
- ***Ultimately – prophecy reveals our own hearts.***
  - Illustration - prophecy peels back the curtain of our own hearts and we don't want to see what's behind it (Wizard of Oz)