

## God Gave Prophets

May 16, 2019

### Ephesians 4:8-12 ESV

8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?)

10 He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

- Verse 11 is neither an org chart, corporate hierarchy, resume nor job description.
- These titles are functional roles that are relational and interdependent.
- There is a difference between members of the Body of Christ who operate in a gift by the Holy Spirit and those who hold an office (not all who prophesy are prophets).
- Those who hold an office have an authority in the Church that those who operate in a gift don't have.

### Acts 21:8-10 ESV

8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

- The description and function of verse 11 is all but lost in Christendom today. Biblically it still exists and is mandated by Scripture. Experientially, it is lost.
- Some reasons why the function of the five-fold ministry gifts are lost today:
  - The corruption of pride and selfish ambition in church leadership.

*"Americans trust in faith leaders and pastors fell to a record low of 37%, ranking below multiple medical professions, teachers, and police and just above journalists." —Gallup 2018*
  - The doctrine of "cessationism."
- "Cessationism: The belief that tongues, and other special gifts enjoyed by believers in the early Christian movement faded early in the history of the church, and are thus not present today. The time of cessation is variously defined as the date of the completion of the last book of the Christian Scriptures or the death of the last Apostle. Antonym: Continuationism."  
—[religioustolerance.org](http://religioustolerance.org)

**PROPHET** (prophētēs) interpreter of oracles, interpreter of hidden things including:

- current and future events
- God's sovereign purposes and plans
- man's spiritual condition and salvation

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 ESV

19 Do not quench the Spirit.

20 Do not despise (exoutheneō - contemptible, set at nought, rejected, cast aside, with mockery) prophecies,

21 but test everything; hold fast what is good.

1 Corinthians 14:27-33 ESV

27 If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret.

28 But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.

29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.

30 If a revelation (apokalyptō - to uncover, to lay bare what has been veiled, disclose, make manifest)(apokalyptō - to uncover, to lay bare what has been veiled, disclose, make manifest) is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.

31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged,

32 and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.

33 For God is not a God of confusion but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints,

### **Judging Prophecies**

- Is the content the Word of God?
- Does your spirit bear witness?
- Does the content build up, encourage and console?

1 Corinthians 14:3-4 ESV

3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

## **Current and Future Events**

Acts 11:27-30 ESV

27 Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius).

29 So the disciples determined, every one according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.

30 And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Acts 21:8-14 ESV

8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.

9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.

10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

- The NT prophet gives insight into God's sovereign purposes and plans, as well as current events and circumstances, but does not give individual guidance, independent of the Christian's personal and individual relationship with God.

## God's Sovereign Purposes and Plans

Acts 13:1-4 ESV

1 Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Acts 15:30-33 ESV

30 So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

32 And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.

33 And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them.

## Man's Spiritual Condition And Salvation

Jeremiah 23:25-27 ESV

25 I have heard what the prophets have said who prophecy lies in my name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!'

26 How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophecy lies, and who prophecy the deceit of their own heart,

27 who think to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot my name for Baal?

Ezekiel 14:1-4 ESV

1 Then certain of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me.

2 And the word of the LORD came to me:

3 Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I indeed let myself be consulted by them?

4 Therefore speak to them and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Any one of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him as he comes with the multitude of his idols.

Matthew 23:1-7 ESV

1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples,

2 The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat,

3 so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice.

4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long,

*6 and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues  
7 and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.*