

something will happen, then it will happen. This is a way to test the word of a prophet. But we must modify this test with the words of Jeremiah (chapter 18) and the example of Jonah in which the predicted event does not take place. But it does not take place for a reason—because the word accomplished its goal of correction.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 provides another test that is easier to apply. If the prophet tells us to worship other gods, his message is not true.

This test can be applied before one waits for the fulfillment of any prediction. It even applies to prophecies that do not contain predictions.

### **How does the gift of prophecy relate to scripture?**

Both the message of someone exercising the gift of prophecy and the Bible bring us the word of the Lord. In the case of the Bible, however, we have a word that has stood the test of years of use and

acceptance of the church, guided by the Holy Spirit. The Word as revealed in scripture is thus the standard by which other words are judged. Unlike Abraham, we have the benefit of both the scriptures and the tradition of the church by which to judge our own individual experiences.

### **Is the gift of prophecy dangerous?**

The penalty for false prophecy in Biblical times was death (Deuteronomy 18:20). While we don't have the death penalty in church life today, one should always be careful when claiming that something is a word from the Lord. God's name is not to be taken carelessly or lightly.

Pastors and other leaders must use discernment in dealing with those who claim a word from the Lord.

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For more information see:

- ***The Authority of the Bible***
- ***What is the Word of God?***
- ***I Want the Baptism of the***

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Courtesy of:**

**Spiritual Gifts:  
Prophecy**

*Spiritual Gifts:*

# PROPHECY

Later, I will give my Spirit to everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will have dreams, and your young men will see visions. In those days I will even give my Spirit to my servants, both men and women.

— Joel 2:28, 29

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## **What is prophecy?**

Prophecy is speaking the word or message of God for a particular circumstance or time.

In Biblical times prophets foretold the future, condemned unrighteous acts, gave encouragement, recommended courses of action to rulers or to priests and warned of judgment.

Only a small portion of the work of a prophet involves predicting the future, and even the predictions are designed either to teach or to correct.

## **What is the gift of prophecy?**

The gift of prophecy is the gift of receiving messages from the Lord to speak forth. These messages can come at any time or place and are often not under the conscious control of the person who speaks them so that the person speaking does not choose whether to utter the message. (If the gift of prophecy is true, the message will always be from God, of course.)

The gift of prophecy is one of the information types of gifts given by the Holy Spirit. Others

## **The Holy Spirit . . . will give you power. — Acts 1:8**

gift of prophecy to use in whatever office they exercise in the church. A pastor, evangelist or teacher may have this gift. An apostle probably will have it.

The office of the prophet is one established in the church to provide continuing correction and guidance from a person that the church recognizes as possessing a true gift. The church also

recognizes that the person is reliable in the exercise of that gift and has the wisdom to use it properly. In appointing someone to the office of prophet, the church recognizes that the person so commissioned will speak the word of the Lord only when he or she is certain that a message is from God.

Pastors, evangelists, teachers and other church leaders, as well as those exercising the office of the prophet must apply discernment to any message identified as a word from the Lord, and must correct those who express a false word.

**Is a prophecy always given in a particular kind of language? Will it always be grammatical and elegant?**

Yes. Many people may have the

No. A prophecy will be expressed in words appropriate to the personality of the person expressing the message. Often people exercising the prophetic gift try to use theological wording, Biblical phrases or even archaic language to express the prophecy. *It is alright to express a message you have received from God in ordinary speech.*

In receiving the Word of the Lord, we must separate the way the message is delivered from the message itself. God has always used a variety of messengers and methods to present His word.

Don't let the speaker, writer or the form in which the message comes distract you from the message.

## **How can one test prophetic utterances?**

We are instructed to test the spirits to see whether they are of God. In Deuteronomy 18:21 & 22 we are told that if God says