The Spirit of Prophecy

- Revelation 19:10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: *for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*

The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Surely then, this statement shows us that prophecy in the Bible, and among Christians today should relate to what our Lord has spoken in His revealed Word.

Prophecy exhorts, edifies and comforts.

- 1 Corinthians 14:3 But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.

The prophet’s job is to promote purity and to strengthen the church, which is exactly what the Word of God does. For example, we wash ourselves in the water of the Word.

- Ephesians 5:26-27 That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

We are strengthened in our faith as we imbibe more of the Word of God.

- Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

We receive comfort and hope from the Word, which we are able to pass on to others as God has given to us. Here is a familiar scripture used on the front page of this website to illustrate this point and another to show that God indeed does comfort us.

- Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Therefore we see that prophecy is also the revealed Word of God, contained within the Holy Bible, or a word given by an actual prophet who will point the receiver in the way of truth, and that demonstrates the office of prophet, which is one of the ascension gifts of our Lord Jesus Christ or it could be a word prophesied by a believer through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- Ephesians 4:11-13 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

All of the fivefold ministry offices are responsible for perfecting the saints in some way or other, until we all come into the unity of faith and the fullness of Christ. Here, I must say that this is why we see such weak and lackluster Christians, because most churches are of the opinion that these gifts ceased with the Apostles, yet they will acknowledge pastors, evangelists and teachers!
The gift of prophecy given by the Holy Spirit as He determines.

- 1 Corinthians 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

All the gifts are given that we can profit by them.

- 1 Corinthians 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Another version writes:

- 1 Corinthians 12:7 To each person has been given the ability to manifest the Spirit for the common good. (ISV)

When we look through scripture, we see many men were mouthpieces for God. They were used by God in various ways, but all were directed to bring about God’s purposes and plans.

- 2 Timothy 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

Yes, everything they wrote and spoke was inspired by God. Their lives were not their own but devoted to doing God’s will. None of them had an easy time, but they all persevered until the end. You have only to look at the Apostle Paul’s life,

- 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Here, I note that only the Apostle John did not die a violent death, sadly the rest were put to death. Similarly, the Old Testament prophets were also suffering servants; here are some examples.

Moses, when he was eighty years old, had to go and tell Pharaoh to let God’s people go. He then spent forty years walking round the wilderness with a stiff-necked people whom God was determined would not enter His promised land, because of their unbelief.

Daniel was taken captive to Babylon as a young man and served four foreign Kings, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus. He was greatly stretched, yet gained great favour by interpreting dreams, reading writing on the wall and surviving being thrown into a den of lions, because God was with him.

Consider Jeremiah – he was a young man who was not allowed to marry and all his prophecies from God fell on deaf ears. He was vilified for them, cast into prison and a dungeon, because they did not want to believe what he said.

The prophet Isaiah went naked and barefoot for three years at God’s request.

- Isaiah 20:3 And the LORD said, like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia
Elijah also had a hard time and great faith; He prayed, and it did not rain for three and a half years. He prayed again and the rain came to end the drought. He overcame the prophets of Baal and slew them. He was hounded by Jezebel, who was determined to have his head off. He did mighty miracles; raised a child from the dead; parted the Jordan river and went over dry shod; called down fire from heaven, and, at the end of his ministry, he was taken straight up into heaven in a chariot of fire.

Now, it is really not possible to chronicle all the amazing feats of all God’s prophets here, but you must have noticed that it was not a cushy job with an easy luxurious living or one that you would take just for the title or prestige – it was a really hard life of faith and obedience to God! Yet, in today’s churches many like to call themselves ‘the prophet’. Here I think they may be confused between the office of Prophet, given by Jesus as His ascension gift to the church, and the gift of prophecy. The Apostle Paul said that we all can prophesy, meaning through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- 1 Corinthians 14:31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

But there is another spirit that likes to bring confusion – the false prophet. John tells us,

- 1 John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

And not only false prophets but false teachers also, said Peter.

- 2 Peter 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

These work through false brethren.

- Galatians 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.

And even false Apostles.

- 2 Corinthians 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

Jesus Himself warned of many false prophets in His Olivet address regarding the end times.

- Matthew 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many.

- Matthew 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

When we submit ourselves under a false ministry, we can get into bondage (see Galatians 2:4 above), because we have believed a lie, and have not tried the spirit. How do we do that? We must examine the fruit and the doctrine of their ministry. Be like those in Berea to whom Paul preached, and who searched the scriptures daily to see if these things were true or false.

- Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Prophecy and doctrine must line up with the Word of God and the fruit of the Spirit.
The Christian Comforter

- Galatians 5:22-24 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Paul warns us not to be deceived

- 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Therefore beware, said Jesus

- Matthew 7:15-17 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

If you receive a prophecy, does it exhort, edify or comfort you? It may convict you and direct you into truth which is good. If it is wild and wacky and completely off the biblical scale ignore it and steer clear out of danger. A godly prophecy will sit well and bring you peace. Remember, exhort, edify and comfort – key words which lead to truth.