

Spirit of Prophecy

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This far-reaching presentation by Waggoner must have stunned some of the participants in the conference of 1899. In it, he sweeps back the curtain of glory and gives the church glimpses at the power that God wants to pour out in abundance, so the earth can be lightened with the glory of God. Some very simple and familiar texts of Scripture are given a surprising and refreshing interpretation, in this landmark study.

Luke 3

² The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

That word has wonderfully impressed itself on me in our work during the last summer. The word of the Lord came to John the Baptist.

Survey of the Work of John the Baptist

If we take but a brief survey of the scope of John's work, we shall see that this same message may be a wonderful comfort for us all. Remember that when John came preaching, he came as the voice of one crying in the wilderness, saying:

Luke 3

⁴ ...Prepare you the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

⁶ And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

The word of God came to John, and he was the voice. The word of God is a living word. The word of God is a living entity,—a real thing. The word of God came to John, and uttered itself by his mouth. He was only the voice.

Now let us read the message that we may see our relation to it:

Isaiah 40

³ The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, Prepare you the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:

⁵ And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

⁶ The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field:

⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades: because the spirit of the Lord blows upon it: surely the people is grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

⁹ O Zion, that brings good tidings, get you up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that brings good tidings, lift up your voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

¹⁰ Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.

Keep fixed in your minds this thought, that the work of John the Baptist was not a circumscribed work. It was not a work limited to one place, to one time, or to one man. John the Baptist was not a man simply who had a work to be finished when he died, but he was a voice, the embodiment of the word of God. And that message by John the Baptist was to prepare the way of the Lord.

The angel who foretold the birth of John said:

Luke 1

¹⁷ And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

From this we see that the way of the Lord is prepared by

preparing a people. And when the way of the Lord is prepared, as spoken by Isaiah, “the crooked shall be made straight.” Mark that, and “make straight paths for your feet”; then “the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.”

The Lord makes known his way to his people, and his way is in his people. So when a people shall be prepared for the Lord, the glory of the Lord will be revealed: God’s way is prepared when his people are prepared.

Why did not the Lord come years ago? Why does he not come today? There must be a reason for it. What is it? We are not ready. There are many people who are not ready, who will yet be ready; many people who do not now know anything about the Lord will yet say, “This is our God.”

The Lord cannot come, because his way is not prepared. Mark this, brethren and sisters: there is more to this work than the mere saving of a few souls on this earth. That is a mighty thing,—a thing which is more than our minds can grasp,—but God’s mind is infinitely greater than that.

The glory of the Lord is to be revealed; and that glory is to be revealed to all on this little planet as they have never seen it before.

Ephesians 3

⁸ Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

⁹ And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

¹⁰ To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

¹¹ According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Here upon the earth is to be made known, through the church, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places,

the manifold wisdom of God,—the glory and power of God.

When the Lord Jesus comes from heaven in a flame of fire, the heavens will be covered with his glory. This message, however, prophesies that the glory of God shall be revealed preliminary to his coming. The way of the Lord is prepared when his way is seen in his people; then the glory of the Lord is revealed. It shines forth from his people.

Many people will be saved, who have not yet heard God's truth. Thousands have died with just a glimmering of the light.

The questions may arise,

“Why should we in the last days have so much more light than somebody else? and why should more be required of us in the very last days than of somebody else? If persons formerly were saved with only a glimmering of light, why should it be necessary for a great flood of light to come on the people of the last days?”

Revealing the Glory of God

As I said, the gospel of God means more than the salvation of a few souls: it is the revealing of his glory.

When Jesus Christ was on the earth:

John 1

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The He departed, and gave “to every man his work”:

Mark 13

³⁴ For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work.

That work is to go and preach the gospel to every creature. In sending us out he says:

Matthew 28

²⁰ ...Lo, I am with you;

for his name is Immanuel—God with us. If we could only grasp these simple truths, and put them into practice, a mighty work would be done. I am not saying anything new when I tell you,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to himself...

Who are “us”? Those whom he has reconciled. How many are us? All. The next verse tells who, and how many, these are:

¹⁸ ...who has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

¹⁹ To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ...

Who are “we”? Everyone who is reconciled. You cannot make the pronoun unlimited in one case, and then narrow it down to a few in the other. When we read that God has reconciled “us,” we do not want to limit the “us” to Peter, Paul, James, and John. We do not want to leave ourselves out of that. He has reconciled us. Thank the Lord!

Not imputing unto us our trespasses, not counting us guilty, he has put into us—the same “us” whom he reconciled—the word of reconciliation. How did he reconcile us? By the word of reconciliation. He sent unto us the word of reconciliation, and that reconciled us; so that we—all who are reconciled—are ambassadors for Christ:

²⁰ ...as if God were beseeching by us, we pray you, in Christ’s stead, Be reconciled to God.

It does not need a multiplication of words for one who takes that text, and believes it, to see that, in the purpose of God, every soul who receives the message of reconciliation from God is to be a reproduction of the Lord Jesus Christ. The work and the life of Jesus of Nazareth are to be reproduced in every one who receives the message of reconciliation; and they will be, if he receives the message of reconciliation in its fulness.

The message of John the Baptist reaches clear down to the coming of the Lord, when he comes with his reward. The same work is going on now to prepare a people for the Lord. Therefore, just as the word came to John in the wilderness, so to every one who receives the reconciliation of God, the word of God comes.

We do not appreciate our privileges; we do not appreciate the gift of God to us. The word of the Lord came to John, and he knew it, and spoke it. Even so is it to be with each one of us. Christ is the Word, and we are to present him.

Look again at this text:

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁹ ...[He] has put in us the word of reconciliation.

It is the same thought as he said in the first chapter of *Acts*:

Acts 1

⁸ ...you shall be witnesses unto me...

It is Christ reproducing himself,—the Spirit of God speaking through each individual directly to the people.

Now when Christ spoke, it was as by one who had authority. The word came from him as direct from God. He was a prophet like unto Moses,—a great prophet, raised up to speak God's word to the people. He said:

John 12

⁴⁹ For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and

what I should speak.

Keeping the Commandments

This testimony of Jesus is in the church. In the twelfth chapter of *Revelation* we read something about this:

Revelation 12

¹⁷ And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

How many of the people there spoken of keep the commandments of God? All. Is commandment-keeping a denominational affair, an individual matter? It is an individual matter. All have the same righteousness, because each one will have the righteousness of God.

How many are to have the faith of God? All. Do they have it simply as a mass, or will each person have the faith of Jesus for himself? Each one will have it for himself.

We read that the manifold wisdom of God is known to the principalities and powers by means of the church (*Ephesians* 3:10). But the church is composed of units, individuals; the church is the house of God, the temple of the living God, because each individual member is also the temple of the living God.

Just as the human body is composed of an infinite number of cells, each cell having life, the life of God, and the life of the body is the united life of all these, so the church of God is composed of a vast number, each one having life from God; and the life of the church is the union of all those units.

This is simple enough.

“The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God.”

Does the dragon make war with the church as a whole, or with individuals? He comes pretty close to us as individuals sometimes; and the fact that somebody in the church has successfully resisted him, while it is an encouragement to us, is not resistance for us.

I like to hear the testimony of how brethren have met the enemy, and conquered him in the faith of Christ; but that does not conquer him for me. I also must resist, steadfast in faith.

“Here are they [the individuals] that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

“The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

They all keep the commandments of God, and they all have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Each individual of the body keeps the commandments of God, and each individual has the testimony of Jesus Christ. That is not a rash statement; we all believe that. It is not anything new; just simply what we read here.

The Spirit of Prophecy

Now read in what the angel whom John was about to worship said to him:

Revelation 19

¹⁰ See you do it not: I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

You have made the application already.

“Here are they that keep the commandments of God,”

“...and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Can we not substitute for that last phrase the divine synonym: “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”? Thus we read,

“The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the spirit of prophecy.”

How many have the spirit of prophecy? All who keep the commandments of God. Is that so? Now, brethren, do not be afraid to say amen to this, because it is not presumption.

If it depended upon us, it would be presumption to say, “My sins are forgiven,” or “I am a child of God.” If it was from me, it would be presumption to say, “I am a servant of God;” it would be presumption to come to God’s throne to pray. I would not dare to do that if he had not told me to come; but when he has told me to come, I dare not stay away.

It is not presumption for me to come directly to the throne of God. There is no door keeper to bar the way. God has not put an intermediary between himself and us, but he has a Mediator to bring us to him; for through him we have access to God by the one spirit.

Sometimes a fanatic will make a rush to get into the presence of an earthly king, but that is presumption; he has no authority, no right to do so. How much greater presumption it would be for us to come into the mighty presence of God for ourselves, if we had no right there, and we have no right there, unless he provides the way. But thank God, he himself is the way.

Even so it is not presumption for us to believe that God has given us the spirit of prophecy, when he himself says so. Now I know this is a stupendous truth, but I thank God that salvation is a stupendous thing.

If we should speak out bluntly at first, and say that the spirit of prophecy is for every individual, somebody would think it was almost blasphemy. But here when we read ourselves into it, we cannot back out; and why should we want to? Why should we want to reject, or hold away from us, any good thing that comes from the Lord?

It is not presumption to take anything that God gives to us, because we get it only as we are humble; and no presumptuous soul ever receives the gift of God.

“Here are they that keep the commandments of God.”

Now would you feel as if that scripture were fulfilled if we could point but to one or two, or even a dozen, among us, and say,

“They are good people; they keep the commandments; therefore we are a commandment-keeping people.”

We must have the same righteousness that Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Paul, and John had; we must be those men. God reproduces himself in his works; but O, what infinite variety there is! God reproduces himself in his people, but each individual is to get his fulness from the Lord; for the Spirit divides to every man severally as he will.

Someone will think,—I know the thought that is in some of your minds,—when we come to this matter of the testimony of Jesus, the spirit of prophecy, and when we come to making the substitution which the angel himself has made for us, that we are treading on sacred ground, because we have got one among us who has the spirit of prophecy, and therefore we must not have that as individuals.

The idea is that we have the spirit of prophecy because there is one among us who has it. That is to say, we are keeping the commandments of God because we have got a good man among us, who keeps the commandments of God.

Some of you think that the reading of this, and the saying of this, must necessarily put a slight on the one who has been chosen for a special work,—a work that no other person in the world has or will have. Does it? No.

The Gift is for All

In the eleventh chapter of *Numbers* we read of seventy who

were chosen, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon them:

Numbers 11

²⁶ But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the Spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp.

They did not put on a clerical coat and collar, but they were right there among the common people, as a part of them, and they prophesied.

Numbers 11

²⁷ And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp.

²⁸ And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them.

²⁹ And Moses said unto him, Do you envy for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!

Well, the last part of that thing has been done. More than eighteen hundred years ago, after a little period of waiting, there came the sound of a rushing, mighty wind, and filled all the place where the people were; and they began to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, and were counted mad by some. Then Peter, filled with the same Spirit, rose and said:

Acts 2

¹⁶ This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

How many are left out? Not one. Moses, the man of God, was filled with the Spirit. He uttered this prayer,

“Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and

that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!”

Why do not all have the spirit of prophecy? Because they haven’t received it. That is the only reason. This prayer has been answered: the Lord has poured out his Spirit upon all; for he is no respecter of persons. And this is that they might all prophesy.

An Infinite Variety

But we have a narrow, circumscribed idea of what prophesying is. We have our minds fixed upon one thing, and we imagine that everybody must do just that way, or it is not the spirit of prophecy.

Now mind this: God reproduces himself in an infinite variety of ways, and never twice in the same way; therefore it is utterly useless for any one to think to impose upon God or upon God’s people by copying somebody else.

So when we find a person coming up, and professing to have the testimony of Jesus, and modeling that testimony as nearly as possible after the real, because that is the way—O, that is not the way!

Desire to Prophecy

Coupled with that prayer of Moses, and the fact that the Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh, waiting only that everybody shall receive Him, take the words of the apostle Paul:

1 Corinthians 14

¹ Follow after charity...

Who shall do this? Just a few? No, everybody.

¹ Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy.

He does not say that some should follow after charity, and that others may prophesy. No; the one is as broad as the

other: all should walk in love, and all should have the spirit of prophecy.

In this same chapter we read:

²⁴ If all prophesy, and there come in one that believes not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all;

²⁵ And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Who do the prophesying? All the church. If one comes in, he is judged of all, convicted of all. Thus the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is in you of a truth. This will be the case when God is in his people.

But if God is not in the church,—in each individual member of the church,—something is wrong. But when God is truly in the church, these things will be manifest.

All to Speak for God

What is a prophet? A speaker for another. We have it plainly illustrated in the Bible. When Moses was called by the Lord to go down and speak to Pharaoh, he objected, demurred, refused, saying he could not speak. Then the Lord rebuked him, and said, “Who has made man’s mouth?” Then Moses still demurred, and God said:

Exodus 4

¹⁴ Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he comes forth to meet you: and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

¹⁵ And you shall speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do.

¹⁶ And he shall be your spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to you instead of a mouth, and you shall be to him instead of God.

Exodus 7

¹ The Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made you a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet.

Thus we see that a prophet is simply a mouthpiece. He does not originate anything, but is the instrument through which another expresses himself.

In Jesus of Nazareth we have the restoration of that which was lost through the first man, Adam. Now Adam was not simply one individual; but God made them male and female, and called their name Adam. *Genesis* 5:1-2. Christ is the second Adam. Why, there is only one seed; but if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Then the second Adam is not simply one man, Jesus of Nazareth, but all males and females who are in him.

There have been faithful men in all ages who have not known all the truth, or had the power that God was willing to manifest in them; yet they will be saved. We are bringing no accusation or condemnation against any man in whom all the power of God has not been manifest.

The fact that there will be some people in the last days who will keep, not a part, but the whole of the commandments of God,—who will have the complete faith of Jesus manifest in them, in whom the testimony of Jesus will be perfectly reproduced,—does not prove that they are any better than some of these others.

If we, by the grace of Christ, shall be among the number in whom that testimony shall be reproduced, that will not give us the right to boast over some who are less favored; neither will it give us any higher place in the kingdom.

But God must show, not only to the world, but also to the angels, what he can do with poor, fallen, humanity, so that the perfect life of Jesus may be reproduced in all the true church for a testimony to the power of God. The glory of God must be revealed, and all flesh shall see it; it must be so, for the

mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

To Be a Seer

You remember that in the account of Saul's going to consult Samuel, it is written,

1 Samuel 9

⁹ Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spoke, Come, let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.

Now read the message to the Laodicean church:

Revelation 3

¹⁷ Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;

¹⁸ I counsel you to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that you may be rich; and white raiment, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness do not appear; and anoint your eyes with eyesalve, that you may see.

To whom does this message come? To everybody. Each one needs the eyesalve, that he may see. And when he sees, what will he be? A seer. What will he see? God, and the things of God. The message comes:

“Go, and tell what you have seen.”

That is the whole thing. Then it will be the testimony of Jesus, will it not? Christ said,

John 8

³⁸ I speak that which I have seen with my Father.

When we get our eyes open, that we may see, we shall be seers, and we shall simply go and tell people what we have seen. We shall be speakers for God, the Holy Spirit filling us, and speaking through us. Our mouths will simply be the mouths of God.

The Loud Cry

O, when God speaks with multitudes of mouths, yet with but one voice, what a mighty voice it shall be! I cannot speak loud enough, neither is there any person who can utter the voice loud enough; but when that one voice has utterance through ten thousand—yea, ten thousand times ten thousand—mouths, what a mighty sound it will be! What a mighty cry!

1 Peter 4

¹¹ If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

Some may have feared that this meant a depreciation of the spirit of prophecy as we have known it in the church. The spirit of prophecy is there; but until the spirit of prophecy is in every individual in the church, the spirit of prophecy, as it is there, will never be appreciated.

The reason the message that has come to us again and again has been slighted, though nominally accepted,—has been printed, and marked, and put into our pockets unheeded,—is because we have not the spirit of prophecy ourselves.

1 Corinthians 2

¹¹ For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God.

Therefore when the Spirit of God takes the things of God, and gives them to us, it is only as we have the Spirit that gives them that we are able to receive them.

Now is the Accepted Time

May God hasten that day! Hasten it? O, it is here now! Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation. Here is the message.

I say, hasten the time when all who profess to be among the number who keep the commandments of God shall have the testimony of Jesus, so that they will speak as if God were beseeching through them,—as if it were Jesus of Nazareth. O,

what a marvelous thing it is!

1 Corinthians 2

⁹ Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him.

But, thank God, he has revealed them to us by his Holy Spirit. Shall we take them? They are ours; he has given them to us. O, let us receive them just as freely as he has given them!