

The gift of prophecy edifies, exhorts, and comforts (I Corinthians 14:3); helps us build up or strengthen; and should lead us to the Word of God. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to convict of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come (John 16:8-11).

1 Corinthians 14:3 English Standard Version (ESV)

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

John 16:8-11 English Standard Version (ESV)

8 And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; 11 concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Prophecy is divinely inspired and anointed utterance; a supernatural proclamation in a known language. It is the manifestation of the Spirit of God - not of intellect (I Corinthians 12:7), and it may be possessed and operated by all who have the infilling of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 14:31)

1 Corinthians 12:7 English Standard Version (ESV)

7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 14:31 English Standard Version (ESV)

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

Intellect, faith, and will are operative in this gift, but its exercise is not intellectually based. It is calling forth words from the Spirit of God. The gift of prophecy operates when there is high worship (I Samuel 10:5-6), when others prophets are present (I Samuel 10:9-10), and when hands are laid on you by ministers (Acts 19:1-6).

1 Samuel 10:5-6 English Standard Version (ESV)

5 After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim,[a] where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. 6 Then the Spirit of the Lord will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

1 Samuel 10:9-10 English Standard Version (ESV)

9 When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day. 10 When they came to Gibeah,[a] behold, a group of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God rushed upon him, and he prophesied among them.

Acts 19:1-6 English Standard Version (ESV)

19 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland[a] country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John's baptism.” 4 And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in[b] the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.

Some Common Misconceptions About Prophecy

The gift of prophecy (I Corinthians 12) and the office of the prophet (Ephesians 4:11) are not the same thing.

There is a ministry of the prophet, but not everyone is a prophet. For example, a boy may wear a Cubs baseball cap, but that does not mean he plays professional baseball for the Chicago Cubs. You may prophesy, but operating in the simple gift of prophecy does not qualify you to stand in the office of a prophet, much like wearing a Cubs hat does not qualify you to play baseball for the Chicago Cubs - you must be gifted. To stand in the office of a prophet, one must have a consistent manifestation of at least two of the revelation gifts ([word of wisdom](#), [word of knowledge](#), or [discerning of spirits](#)) plus prophecy.

Prophecy is not the [interpretation of tongues](#).

The Bible says that "greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues" (I Corinthians 14:5), even though both are inspired utterances. Tongues, of course, is inspired utterance in an "unknown" tongue. The interpretation of tongues is inspired utterance telling that which was spoken in tongues. Prophecy, on the other hand, is inspired utterance in a "known" tongue. The difference between interpretation and prophecy is that interpretation is dependent upon tongues, whereas prophecy is not.

Prophecy is not prediction..

People sometimes think that "prophecy" means to predict (foretell) what will happen in the future. Actually, the simple gift of prophecy is essentially forthtelling; it is a ministry to make people better and more useful Christians now. Prophecy in the New Testament church carries no prediction with it whatsoever, for "he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (I Corinthians 14:3). Notice that there is no mention of the word prediction here.

Prophecy is not the same thing as preaching..

The words preach and prophesy come from two entirely different Greek words. To "preach" means to proclaim, announce, cry, or tell. Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and PREACH the gospel.." (Mark 16:15). Note that He didn't say to prophesy the Gospel.

The word prophecy means to "bubble up, to flow forth, or to cause to drop like rain." Teaching and preaching are preplanned, but prophecy is not.

The Bible tells us that we are to "Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things." I Thessalonians 5:20-21. When a prophecy is given, we are to test it and hold on to what is good in it.

Seven Ways to Judge Prophecy

1.	By their fruits you shall know them. (Matthew 7:16-18,20)
2.	Does it glorify Christ? (John 16:14; I Corinthians 12:3; I John 4:1-2)
3.	Does it agree with the Scriptures? (Isaiah 8:20)
4.	Are their prophecies fulfilled? (Deuteronomy 18:22) Some prophecies are not of God even though they may come to pass. The benchmark remains that all prophecies should exalt the Lord Jesus.
5.	Is the prophecy disjointed or confused? True prophecy is line upon line and precept upon precept. (Isaiah 28:13)
6.	Do the prophecies produce liberty or bondage? (Romans 8:15)
7.	All believers have an unction (anointing) within them that tells them when something is wrong. Prophecies should witness with our spirit. (I John 2:20,27)

Why Is Prophecy Important?

There are five reasons why prophecy is so important in the local church:

1.	It brings life. Prophecy brought life to the valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1-4).
2.	It gives spiritual vision. The Bible says, " <i>Where there is no vision, the people perish.</i> " The Lord gives vision through the prophetic word (Proverbs 29:13,18).
3.	It edifies, exhorts, and comforts (I Corinthians 14:3).
4.	It brings revival and restoration. True prophecy brings restoration and revival (Acts 2:16-18).
5.	It guides you to your right position in Christ. Prophecy is used by God to direct you where you need to go (Acts 13:1-3)