

PROPHETS AND PERSONAL PROPHECY

by
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God's Prophetic Voice Today

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the great Company of Prophets that God is raising up in these last days, to the multitude of Christians who have heard the Voice of God and want to fulfill His personal Word to them, and to those Pastors and Christian leaders who need guidelines for counseling people about prophets and personal prophecy.

APPRECIATION

Heartfelt appreciation is given to my wife, Evelyn, for her encouragement for me to finish the book and her willingness to play second-fiddle to the book until it was finished, to the C.I. staff for carrying on the C.I. ministry while their President was writing, and to those obedient vessels who kept prophesying the book to be written. Special appreciation is given to Paul Thigpen for his dedicated, donated, professional editing in appreciation of the prophet and personal prophecy.

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Capitalization:

Dr. Hamon has taken *Author's Prerogative* in capitalizing certain words which are not usually capitalized according to the standard grammatical practice. This is done for the purpose of clarity and emphasis. Reference to the Church/Bride are capitalized because of Her union with Deity through Jesus Christ. Prophets are put in bold in chapter two for emphasis.

All Scriptures are taken from King James Version (KJV) except when designated.

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FOREWORD

Recognizing the tremendous need for clarity and understanding the role of the prophet within the Church today, along with the need for this role to be fulfilled, it is my privilege to recommend this timely and significant book. We live in a day in which we are desperate for the pure word of God, as heard through his anointed prophets, in order that we may receive direction, correction and edification to more effectively serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Dr. Bill Hamon is truly one of God's special men having been given a transparent understanding of the role of the prophet. He is being used through a great anointing as a prophet himself. By the power of the Holy Spirit, he is personally responsible for activating hundreds of others through the release and impartation of this gift.

As President of Christian Believers United and Executive Director of the National Leadership Conference it has been my privilege to direct and host hundreds of conferences on Christian growth for the equipping of the saints of God for

service. Our speakers and teachers have included, along with Bill Hamon, such distinguished men and women of God as Jamie Buckingham, Kenneth Copeland, John and Anne Gimenez, Jack Hayford, Derek Prince, Oral Roberts, Ken Sumrall and Iverna Tompkins. Dr. Hamon is in that company of speakers most requested by those truly serious about knowing God's agenda for their lives. Dr. Hamon is an instrument of blessing and encouragement as a key speaker and teacher at conferences throughout the world.

This significant book enhances the effectiveness of Dr. Hamon's Ministry and imparts to every student of the Bible an in-depth respect, knowledge and revelation about today's anointed prophets and their validity. As God's own people, we are awakened to the prophets' value and importance for each individual as well as the Church at large.

Few people in ministry today have had, for me, the personal impact of Dr. Bill Hamon. He is both a co-laborer in Christ and a close friend. I have grown to respect him as an anointed effective man and prophet of God.

I know this book will prove to be an important resource manual for all God's people. It is ideal for personal study or as a text for the classroom. *Prophets and Personal Prophecy* should become required reading for every Christian leader and believer. You will be enlightened and enriched as you read this book and as you apply to your own life the principles it contains.

Jim Jackson

THERE ARE MORE EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL PROPHECY
SCRIPTURE THAN ANY OTHER BIBLICAL SUBJECT

COMMENDATIONS

BISHOP EARL PAULK: Christ Jesus gives gifts to His Church; Bill Hamon is one of those gifts. He flows in instruction, edification, and prophetic insight for the maturity and unity of the Body of Christ. He speaks as one with a seasoned, proven ministry bearing good fruit to the glory of the Kingdom of God.

I am grateful to God both for Bill's insight into prophetic ministry and for the demonstration of prophetic truth in the lives of thousands of people who have received renewed vision and release to follow spiritual direction from God.

The message of Ephesians 2:20 — (the Church) built on the foundation of apostles and prophets is the sweeping move of the Holy Spirit across the world today. *Prophets and Personal Prophecy* seals this understanding within the hearts of believers so that God's army can forge confidently ahead in manifesting the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in Heaven.

DR. JOHN GIMENEZ: Finally, a book that will help saints understand their personal word from God. It should save pastors hours of counseling time. This book is not an abstract

doctrinal presentation but a practical "how to" guide on what personal prophecy is and what you are supposed to do with it. This book is an absolute must for anyone who has ever heard (or thought they heard) from God.

DR. EMANUELE CANNISTRACI: The greatest and most complete presentation on **personal prophecy** ever written. Millions of Christians believe that God has communicated with them and that the Holy Spirit has directed them. The guidelines given in this book for recognizing and relating to a true word from the Lord are a must for those desiring spiritual maturity.

DR. KEN SUMRALL: A thorough and balanced presentation of the office of the prophet and personal prophecy. Dr. Hamon speaks not from theory, but as a recognized prophet with experiential knowledge of the prophetic ministry. I heartily recommend this valuable book for study for every believer.

REV. GARY GREENWALD: Dr. Bill Hamon is one of the most mature and accurate prophets in the Church today. His prophetic ministry flows with divine love and wisdom. He is a forerunner and father to many in the **company of prophets** today. The prophesying of the prophets will bring the Church from a scattered valley of dry bones to a unified exceeding great army of the Lord (Ez. 37).

REV. NORVEL HAYES: Titus 2:1, says to "speak things which become the teaching that is healthy." Specific guidelines are needed for the prophetic ministry to be healthy. *Prophecy and Personal Prophecy* is a valid ministry in the Church today. A New Testament church has to have the different ascension offices and gifts of the Holy Spirit operating. A Church that never has a prophet or the other fivefold ministries come by, will always be crippled and weak. It may be a nice growing church but it will always be spiritually weak.

PREFACE

Bill Hamon's religious background can best be described as "American heathen." In his early years, neither his parents, nor any of his four brothers and sisters, were church-goers. Living out on a 160-acre farm in rural Oklahoma, he had never even set foot inside a church building. But all that changed on July 29, 1950 — his sixteenth birthday.

Bill had been attending a Brush Arbor meeting for four weeks in the countryside of southeastern Oklahoma. That night, he accepted Christ Jesus as his personal Saviour as he knelt by his bedside at home. Two nights later he walked down the old "sawdust trail" between bridge planks laid across some logs cut from the surrounding trees. Electricity had not yet been brought to that part of the community, so kerosene lanterns were hanging from the poles which held up the brush laid across the top. An accordion and some guitars were playing while the saints were singing the invitational songs.

As he reached the front, Bill knelt at that old rustic bridge board altar and started praying. Within a few moments he was gloriously filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in a heavenly language.

Bill had to begin and continue his Christian walk for several years before any of the rest of his family would become Christians. He was the firstfruit, but within the next ten years he would lead all of his family to the Lord except his older

brother, who became a Christian while Bill was in Bible College. After graduating from high school, Bill moved away from home and started living on his own in a boarding house in Amarillo, Texas, and began attending an Independent Restorational Church. In October of 1952, he had just finished reading a book proclaiming that one could have power with God through prayer and fasting. The book's emphasis on the value of fasting, and his own zeal for God, motivated him to fast for seven days. He had a burning desire to be all that God would want and allow him to become.

At the end of the seven-day fast, Bill was still crying out to know God's plan for his life. This was such a serious, traumatic time of his life that his heart-rending cries were written down, hoping that someday he would understand why he was feeling and thinking as he did. On February 3, 1953, Bill wrote:

I am going to describe the way I feel and the thoughts that keep coming to my mind since fasting and praying about what the Lord Jesus would have me to do. When I pray, I feel that the Lord Jesus has called me to the ministry, but again, I don't know for sure. I want to know some certain way whether he has called me or not.

Sometimes I get so confused, discouraged and downhearted that I just don't know what to do. There is something within that makes me want to go out in the ministry and work for God; then comes that uncertainty about whether it is the Lord's will or not. But even if it were revealed to be His will, how would I ever become a minister? I don't know how you get into the ministry. So why do the thoughts about being a minister keep coming to me?

I can pray, but it doesn't seem like I can get a definite answer. Sometimes I feel like just forgetting about the ministry, or trying to tell myself that I am not called to preach. Maybe I should just go on and

serve the Lord and not worry about whether I am called to preach or not.

But then hunger wells up within my heart, with a great desire to preach God's Word and work for Him. It makes me feel very sad and depressed to think that God may not have called me to do some kind of work for Him. I guess only time will tell, and patience to wait before the Lord. I know what I desire, but I have no idea how to fulfill that desire, or whether God even wants it fulfilled.

To answer his questions, this young man did not receive an angelic visitation, a voice from heaven, or a dream. Instead, God sent a prophet with a personal word of prophecy for him. Bill himself had been used by God several times to speak out in the assembly with prophetic utterances, but he had never seen a manifestation of personal prophecy to an individual before. So he was a bit surprised when the prophet laid hands on him and prophesied:

For, yea, saith the Lord, you shall grow tall and broad in the Lord. You shall testify to those of your own age and they shall call you off to a separate place, desiring to know the Word of God. You shall wait upon the Lord and He shall give you revelations of His Word. For yea, you shall see dreams. The Lord thy God is preparing thee for that work which He has called thee to do and to fulfill His own purpose and pleasure in thee. For the present, remain under the shepherd which you are under, and I will send forth the more mature into the field. I shall send thee forth in My time, saith the Lord. You shall go forth in the eleventh hour, saith God.

At last, he found a glimmer of hope. It was a prophetic word of direction, and encouragement to believe that God had a place for him in His plan and purpose, even as a minister of God in Christ's Church.

This was Bill's first exposure to personal prophecy. He was

greatly excited and encouraged, but his analytical, inquisitive mind had many questions. How could this come to pass? He did not have a Christian family heritage, let alone a heritage of ministry. He knew no ministers personally. He had no idea how someone becomes a minister.

Before God speaks to an individual, He already has a plan, a method, and providential circumstances to bring it all to pass in His timing. But this eighteen-year-old, who had been a Christian less than three years, did not know that God can personally call an individual from youth to do a mighty work for Him in his matured years. So it would be several years before such an understanding and assurance were a part of his faith. All he knew at the time was that he had no idea how all of this could come to pass.

Nevertheless, seven months later, through God's divine providential workings, Bill was attending a Bible college in Portland, Oregon. There, the Lord began teaching this chosen vessel of God about the prophetic ministry, and involving him in it. God wanted him to have a foundation in and an appreciation for the office of the prophet, for personal prophecy, and for the laying on of hands and prophecy by the presbytery. For some thirty years later, Bill would be raised up as a pioneer and a worldwide leader in restoring the office and ministry of the prophet into Christ's Church with full recognition and authority.

No doubt this is the reason God singled him out during that school year as the only young person to be called forth by the faculty to receive prophetic presbytery. It happened this way.

In those early days of the restoration of the prophetic presbytery, no one was called forth to be ministered to unless at least two things happened. First, God had to speak specifically and emphatically about which person was to be chosen, and all the prophetic presbytery ministers had to be in agreement. Second, the candidate desiring ministry from the prophetic presbytery had to fast a minimum of three days even to sit in the section from which candidates would be chosen.

One day an announcement was made by the faculty that a prophetic presbytery would be made available to all those who would fast three days. Bill had already been fasting for six days, so he just continued on for three more. At that appointed service, he was called forth and knelt at the chair as five faculty members laid hands upon him and spoke forth these prophetic utterances on Thursday night, October 1, 1953.

Yea, My son, even as the Spirit of the Lord burned in the heart, yea, even in the bones of My servant Jeremiah, even so doth the fire kindle and burn within thy heart. Yea, thou art as a steed that stands ready to be loosened to go forth, for thou hast the message in thy heart and thou hast an eye that is single and thy love to God has been made known through the Spirit of the Lord.

Fear not, My son, the hand of the Lord hath rested upon thee and the mantle of His power has come upon thee. Yea, and thy mouth shall be quick to speak the word of the Lord, and even as thou shalt speak shall the prophetic utterance come forth, that when thou openest thy mouth to declare the word of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord shall come mightily upon thee, and "thus saith the Lord" shall come forth. Yea, I give unto thee the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge, yea, and thou shalt see things that eyes have not seen, and thou shalt speak.

Yea, My son, thine heart is filled with the love of thy God and thy God looketh down upon thee, and He will bless thy soul and he will equip thee and yea, thou shalt run quickly, for thine heart is seeking God, and the Lord knoweth thy heart this night. Yea, seek ye the Lord, continue to wait much before Him. For yea, He saith, I will speak to thee in the night hour. I will awaken thee and I will instruct thee and thou shalt open thy mouth and thou shalt speak what the Lord doth speak unto thee. Though thou art young in years, yet My Spirit shall teach thee and thy wisdom shall come forth as the voice of the Lord thy God.

For thus saith the Lord, I have even kept thee unto Mine own purpose. Yea, thou knewest Me not, I even sheltered thee. For lo, thou art a chosen vessel, saith the Lord. Yea, I have chosen thee and appointed thee and thou hast been in the hand of the Lord as an instrument, and now, saith the Spirit, the Lord shall place in thy hands weapons wherewith thou shalt fight. For the Lord shall not send thee forth unprepared, but He shall shield thee with faith and He shall equip thee even with His Spirit.

For lo, as occasion shall serve thee, thou shalt arise and act in faith, for the Lord doth give unto thee faith, even the faith of God. Thou shalt not trust in thine own strength, for thou shall be strengthened with the strength of the Lord thy God. Therefore, fear not, saith the Lord, because of thy youth. Lean thou upon the Lord thy God, for in the hour of crisis He shall sustain thee, and in the hour of danger, He shall not forsake thee.

For thus saith the Lord, thou shalt go forth into every place that I shall send thee, and the word of the Lord shall be in thy mouth. Yea, saith the Lord, a winner of souls shalt thou be, for compassion shall dwell in thee and because of the compassion that is in thine heart, thy faith shall even go forth to challenge the enemy. For demons shall retreat before thee and Satan shall yield to thy prayer. For lo, the faith that worketh by love shall work mightily in thee, for to this end hast thou been called, saith the Lord.

Yea, My son, the Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of thy God shall rest upon thee mightily, and behold, the word of the Lord shall flow from thy lips like fresh oil, saith thy God. And yea, thou shalt wield the sword of the Lord fearlessly. Truly I do put deliverance in thy hands, saith the Lord. Truly thou shalt have a ministry of deliverance unto the captives. Truly thou shalt have a ministry of calling My people out, saith the Lord, and for bringing My people

together into the one body, saith the Lord. For truly My hand is upon thee that thou mayest lift up thy voice, even as a trumpet unto My people, saith the Lord. Truly as the Word of the Lord doth minister through thee by revelation My sheep shall hear My voice, saith the Lord, and see that lo, the Master calleth them.

Yea, is not this the day of the Lord that He hath proclaimed? Yea, is not this the day wherein the Lord thy God shall come unto thee? Yea, is not this the day that thou shalt go forth in His might and His power? Have I not said in My Word concerning My own children, "Ye are gods," and yea in these last days ye shall go forth as gods? Thou shalt go forth as gods with power in thine hands, and minister life and faith unto those that are desolate. Yea, I say unto thee, thou shalt be a leader of leaders. Yea, thou shalt see multitudes running unto thee, for as a light upon a tall hill shalt thou be. Yea, fear shall be in the hearts of those round about thee, yet thou shalt stand as one full of courage, saith the Lord.

On February 4—the following year—Bill was ordained to the ministry and began pastoring his first church at the age of nineteen. Only a year before he had been in a dilemma as to whether God had called him, and if so, how God could get him into the ministry. But now, through the prophetic Word, God's call and ordination had been confirmed, and he had been confirmed, and he had been activated and placed in ministry.

Two years later, Bill married a young lady in his church, Evelyn Hixson. I was that lady, and I became a pastor's wife at eighteen. We were blessed in the following six years with two sons and a daughter.

Meanwhile, God foreknew the ultimate ministry He had ordained for His chosen vessel, so He made sure Bill received throughout his years of ministry a maximum exposure to all restored truth, and experience in all the fivefold ministries. He

pastored six years, evangelized three years, taught in a Bible college five years, and founded and developed the Christian International undergraduate and graduate School of Theology, which now has an enrollment of over four thousand students, with graduates serving in the ministry all over the world. Bill began the School of the Holy Spirit in 1979, and started Prophets Conferences and Seminars throughout the U.S. and many foreign countries in 1982. He established the School of Prophets for training those called to the prophetic ministry. During these years he continued his own theological education, earning a Master of Theology, and later a national university honored him with a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1973.

It has now been thirty-five years since Bill began prophesying, received his first personal prophecy from a prophet, received laying on of hands and prophecy by the prophetic presbytery, and received laying on of hands and ordination by a ministerial presbytery. During these nearly four decades, he has laid hands on and personally prophesied over more than fifteen thousand people. These range from small infants to international church leaders, from farmers to politicians and professional people of all types.

Because of this constant giving, Bill has also reaped in like kind: He has received from others a multitude of personal prophecies. Those that were recorded have all been typed and placed in a five inch ring notebook, which contains over 600 pages of double — and single-spaced text. They amount to over 150,000 prophetic words given to the two of us.

These words were prophesied by ministers representing all fivefold ascension gift ministries; by new converts, and ministers who have been ordained over fifty years; by male and female, old and young. They have been received while ministering on almost every continent of the world, from all areas of Christendom where the Holy Spirit is given freedom to express His thoughts to individuals. They have come from Christians in charismatic denominational churches, classical Pentecostal

churches, and different "camps" and fellowships such as those called by the names "restoration," "charismatic," "faith," and "kingdom." They have even come from Christian men's and women's organizations such as the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International and Ladies' Aglow; and from special ministry groups such as Teen Challenge and Maranatha Ministries.

The amazing thing is that in all of these thousands of prophetic words through hundreds of people from all over the world over a period of thirty-five years, there has been no contradiction spoken to Bill's office and calling of prophet.

Just within the last five years, about fifteen prophecies have been received concerning an apostolic anointing to be added to the ascension gift office of the prophet. The Holy Spirit said that this has been given for the purpose of pioneering, establishing, and taking a fatherhood responsibility for the restoration and propagation of the office of the prophet. So Bill understandably has had a burden for writing about the prophet and all levels and realms of the prophetic ministry. This book will be the first of several.

As you read, you will realize that the truths and principles presented in this volume are not just from book learning and research. It includes as well the realities and truths Bill has gleaned on the front line of the prophetic ministry for the last thirty-five years. These guidelines for receiving, understanding and fulfilling a true personal word from the Lord are vital for all those who believe that God still speaks to individuals today. I am firmly convinced that no other book has been written which will provide such critical insight and understanding of the nature of personal prophecy. And I pray it will open new doors of ministry and blessing in the lives of all who read it, study it, and apply it faithfully.

Evelyn Hamon

1

GOD WANTS TO COMMUNICATE

Our God is a personal God. He desires intimate fellowship with individuals more than a distant relationship with humanity as a race. When Adam and Eve were the entire race, the Almighty walked and talked with them. But ever since sin dulled human ears to hearing and human eyes to seeing God, He has not been able to communicate with everyone individually. The race as a whole does not desire His fellowship and is not sensitive enough to hear His voice.

Prophets — God's Communication Channels. For that reason, God has had to find individuals with whom He can communicate personally, and then speak to the rest of the human race through them. Through the ages He has raised up special people called patriarchs and prophets to be His spokesmen to mankind. And in the fullness of time, God spoke to us in the person of Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-2), who was God Himself manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16), the full and complete expression of God Himself (Col. 2:9).

Jesus — God in Human Form. Jesus was Heaven's thoughts, words, principles, plans, and pattern of living made visually and verbally manifest on earth. Though the Old Testament prophets had prophesied in part, often speaking words they themselves

did not fully comprehend, Jesus was more than a prophet. He fully understood and expressed His heavenly Father, speaking the whole counsel of God. He was the brightest display of God's glory and the greatest expression of God's personality ever to occur in all eternity.

Jesus thus rent the veil that kept us from seeing God, and removed our dullness of hearing. He made the way for God to come and dwell personally within each individual. When a person is born again by the blood of Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit, that person's individual body actually becomes a temple of God, a dwelling place for the Most High (1 Co. 6:19). These individuals are then built together as a spiritual house where the fullness of God can dwell (Ep. 2:19-22).

Jesus — The Prototype of a New Race. This is possible because Jesus the God-Man was the beginning of a whole new race of God-created beings. Christ Jesus was the firstborn among many brethren: the prototype of a whole new creation-in-Christ who would become like Him, being conformed to His very image and likeness. That human body of Jesus, containing the fullness of the Godhead, was crucified, buried, and resurrected, and as an immortal body it is even now filled with the fullness of God, and the head of multi-millions of redeemed men and women who make up the Church.

The Bible — God in Written Form. After Jesus ascended bodily to heaven, the world was no longer able to see the fullness of God in the flesh. But Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit wrote in the Bible the guidelines and standards by which God can be fully known and understood. Rightly understood in its full dimension, the Scripture is sufficient to give us knowledge of all we need to be in our time of mortality and into eternity. The Bible is now the revelation of God, all the sacred writings the mortal Church will ever need to do the whole will of God.

The Prophet — God's Spokesman. Today, through the Bible and the Holy Spirit, God desires to walk and talk with us in an

individual, personal, intimate relationship. Yet not all Christians understand how to recognize the voice of the Lord. Even when they do recognize it, many do not know how to respond to it so that it can be fulfilled. In this way, as in many other ways, no individual is self-sufficient in his relationship with God; we all need the rest of the Body of Christ. So God has set within the Body the ministry of the prophet as a special voice; He has established the gift of prophecy as His voice in the midst of the congregation; and He has sent the spirit of prophecy to give testimony of Jesus throughout the world.

Prophecy — The Voice of the Holy Spirit. The coming of the Holy Spirit, the birth of the Church, and the writing of the Bible did not eliminate the need for the prophetic voice of the Lord; in fact, it intensified that need. Peter insisted that the prophet Joel was speaking of the Church age when he proclaimed, "I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17). Paul emphasized that truth when he told the church at Corinth to "covet to prophesy" (1 Cor. 14:39; Eph. 4:11).

God still wants the revelation of His will to be vocalized. So He has established the prophetic ministry as a voice of revelation and illumination which will reveal the mind of Christ to the human race. He also uses this ministry to give specific instructions to individuals concerning His personal will for their lives.

Prophet Ministry — for Illumination, Not Addition. The ministry of the prophet is not, of course, to bring about additions or subtractions to the Bible. Any new additions accepted as infallibly inspired would be counterfeits, false documents which would contain delusions that lead to damnation. Instead, the prophet brings illumination and further specifics about that which has already been written. And the Holy Spirit's gift of prophecy through the saints is to bring edification, exhortation, and comfort to the Church (1 Cor. 14:3).

Personal Prophecy Brings Confirmation and Witness. The Holy Spirit whispering the thoughts of Christ within a Christian's heart is obviously God's divine order for communication. But what the individual has sensed in his spirit must be confirmed: God's counsel is that every word needs to be witnessed to and confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses (2 Cor. 13:1). This is a critical role that can be fulfilled by the prophetic voice.

Of course, personal prophecy must never become a substitute for the individual's responsibility and privilege of hearing the voice of God for himself. God is a jealous God, and is not pleased when we allow anything to hinder an intimate relationship and personal communication with Him—even if the hindrance is from a ministry He Himself has ordained. Personal prophecy must not take the place of our duty to fast, pray, and seek God until we hear from heaven ourselves!

At the same time, many people cannot hear, or will not take time to hear, what God wants to say to them. God is usually more anxious to talk than we are to listen, but He will not always break in on our busy schedules, trying to shout over the noise of the television or social chatter (though occasionally He may catch us while we are asleep.) When this is the case, the Lord often uses the voice of the prophet to speak to individuals, congregations, and nations. But His greatest desire is always for His children to take quality time to wait upon Him until our mind, emotions, and will are cleared sufficiently for Him to communicate His heart and mind to us clearly.

Proven Prophetic Principles. For thirty-five years now I have engaged in prophetic ministry to the Body of Christ. This book, the first in a series on the subject of prophecy, draws on those many years of experience to offer insight for Christians who want to understand more about it. It is not primarily a theological and biblical justification of the authenticity of prophecy in our day; another book will address that issue. Instead, this volume is intended as a practical handbook for those who are already convinced that prophets operate in the

Church today, who have themselves received a personal prophecy, and who want to respond properly and fruitfully to what God is saying to them.

Pastoral Counseling Concerning Personal Prophecy. These pages will also serve as a vital resource for those pastors and elders who spend hours counseling people who believe they have received a true word from the Lord. I am aware that even true prophecies, if not rightly understood or responded to, can cause great confusion and wrong decisions among Christians who are immature, uncommitted, or biblically uneducated. How much worse, then, is the havoc created by false prophecies, requiring hours of pastoral counseling to resolve the resulting problems and heal the resulting heartache.

Pastors who face such situations have my sympathy and compassion. I hope that the truths in this book will help them give wise counsel to all those in their congregations who have received personal prophecies. I also hope they will keep in mind that the godly solution to the problems of personal prophecy is not to isolate the saints from it, nor to discourage them from seeking to hear God personally about their specific needs. Instead, the biblical strategy is to train them to discern what is true, and how to respond properly to the true word from the Lord.

The Prophets Are Coming — Prepare! I believe that this is an age in which God is raising up a multitude of prophets who are anointed and appointed—honest, true, trained, and experientially matured. But mixed in among these will be found those prophets who are ignorant, immature, and even false. There will be no place to hide the saints from them in this day of mass media reaching into every home. So the only true salvation from the enemy's falsehoods will be to expose the saints purposefully and properly to true prophets, educate them to discern true from false, and train them in how to respond.

Restoration or Devastation. In God's armory of weapons and means of ministry, few others, I believe, have as great a potential for blessing or devastation as prophecy. Like the laser, it can be used to bring life, healing, and restoration; or confusion, disruption, and death. Prophecy is no play toy. God has not given it merely to satisfy the curious. It is a volatile chemical in God's laboratory that must be handled by experienced hands and used under proper supervision. My prayer is that this book will serve as a laboratory manual for the preparing and equipping of ministers and saints to properly understand prophecy and the ministry of the prophet.

2

GOD'S PURPOSES FOR PROPHETS

PROPHETS ARE SPECIAL TO THE HEART OF GOD

The **prophetic** ministry is one of the nearest and dearest ministries to the heart of God. The **prophetic** ministry and the voice of the **prophet** were established as God's primary method of communicating with His mankind creation on planet earth. It was the anointing of the **prophet** upon the patriarchs that enabled Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and others to predict future happenings, to receive instruction from God for new things God wanted to do, to decree the prophetic future of their descendants, to receive revelations from God concerning how to deliver His people from bondage, and to build a tabernacle for God's dwelling. The **prophet** was God's verbal contact with His chosen people. Jehovah did not talk to their king or to the people except through His **prophets**. Almost all of the Old Testament books were written by **prophets**.

Prophets Participate in All of God's Plans and Performances.

It was the **prophets** that predicted and prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah. It was a **prophet**, a natural cousin of the Messiah, who prepared the way for the ministry of the Son of God. God reveals His secrets unto His servants, the **prophets**.

He reveals by His Spirit the mysteries of His eternal purposes in the Church to His apostles and **prophets**. **Prophets** were a major ministry in the founding of Christ's Church. They were voices giving divine direction to the early Church in its formative years. The office of the **prophet** has been God's voice throughout the Church age to bring repentance to His people and reformation and restoration during divinely predestined "times of refreshing" (Amos 3:7; Eph. 2:19, 3:5; Acts 3:21).

The **prophet** is one of the five gifted ministries that Christ Jesus gave for the perfecting of His saints and the maturing to manhood of His Church. The book of Revelation declares that the **prophets** are to be instruments of God to execute His judgments. When the seventh angel begins to sound, the mystery of God will be finished, as He has declared to His servants, the **prophets**. The **prophet** and the **prophetic** ministry have been and will continue to be active in every age and dispensation of God's dealings with man. Adam prophesied to his wife in the Garden of Eden before the fall of man. Apostles and **prophets** will be found present at the fall of Babylon, that great and wicked city guilty of shedding the blood of **prophets** and saints (Eph. 4:11-13; Rev. 10:7, 11:10, 18:20).

Prophets Are Special and Precious to God. Yes, **prophets** are very near and dear to the heart of God. They are an integral part of all God is doing on planet earth. They have not been dispensationally depleted nor cemented into a nonfunctional foundation, but are a vital part of all that God has done and shall ever do in His eternal plan for man. God loves His true **prophets**. He takes special pride and interest in His **prophets**. It is the only ministry of which He makes the emphatic declaration "Do my **prophets** no harm." He that curses one of God's true **prophets** incurs the curse of God. He that blesses a **prophet** in the name of a **prophet** receives the same reward that God gives the **prophet**. "God hath set in the Church.... **prophets**." He says, believe His **prophets** and you shall prosper, (Ps. 105:15; Mt. 10:41; I Cor. 12:28; II Chr. 20:20).

God is very sensitive about His **prophets**. To touch one of His **prophets** is to touch the apple of His eye. To reject God's **prophets** is to reject God. To fail to recognize the **prophets**, or to keep them from speaking, is to refuse God permission to speak.

Jesus was a **prophet** in His mortal ministry on earth. He has given that ministry of a **prophet** to men today. Jesus still wants to function as a **prophet** within the Church. To accept and appreciate the ministry of the **prophet** is to accept and appreciate Jesus, the **prophet**. Not to do so is to depreciate that ministry of Jesus to His Church. One reason Jesus is so excited about the restoration of the **prophet** ministry is that it is so near and dear to Him. The restoration of the **prophet** within the Church releases Christ to express Himself more fully to His Church and to the world. Jesus is personally involved in the restoration of the **prophet** to full recognition, position and ministry (I Sam. 8:7; De. 18:15; Gen. 20:7)

PROPHETS PREPARE THE WAY FOR CHRIST'S SECOND COMING

The **prophet** Malachi prophesied that God would send Elijah the **prophet** before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Mal.4:5). When the angel of the Lord prophesied to Zacharias concerning the birth of John, he used the same thoughts that Malachi prophesied: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him [the Messiah] in the spirit and power of Elijah, 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*" (Lu. 1:16,17).

Restoration of Church Prophets a Sign of the Times. It was only natural and according to a literal interpretation of the Scriptures for the Jews to believe that Elijah himself would return personally to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. Yet Jesus declared that John the Baptist fulfilled

Malachi's prophecy. Jesus stated that John the Baptist was A prophet. "Yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias [Elijah], which was for to come" (Mt. 11:9,10,14). John came in the power and spirit of the prophet Elijah. Just as one prophet, John the Baptist, prepared the way for Christ's first coming, now a **company of prophets** will prepare the way for Christ's second coming. * That **company of prophets** is being raised up in the 1980's. God revealed to me that there are **10,000 prophets** on the North American continent alone being prepared to be released within the Church. This **company of prophets** will come forth in the power and spirit of Elijah. They, as a corporate body of **prophets**, will fulfill the prophecy of Malachi in relation to Christ's second coming as John the Baptist fulfilled it in relation to Christ's first coming. A single **prophet** prepared the way for the Messiah of Israel and Redeemer of mankind. The **company of prophets** will prepare the way for Jesus the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The one **prophet** prepared the way for Jesus to come and usher in the Church Age; the many **prophets** will prepare the way for Jesus to come and usher in the Kingdom Age.

**There is a real sense in which John the Baptist was Malachi's Elijah-forerunner (Mal.4:5 with Mt.17:12,13); yet it is equally clear that, as a result of our Lord's rejection there is to be a more dramatic, FINAL fulfillment of Malachi's Elijah prediction (Mt. 17:11, 'shall'; and Rev. 11)." J. Sidlow Baxter, Explore the Book, (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Mi.: 1966), pg. 266.*

Prophets Prepare the Way for Christ's Coming. Prophets prepare for Christ's coming in two primary ways. First, they prepare the way for the Lord to return. Second, they *make ready a people* prepared for the Lord (Is. 40:3; Lu. 1:17).

HOW DO PROPHETS PREPARE THE WAY?

Prophets play a vital role in God's predestined plan for the final return of Christ to the earth. Acts 3:21 declares that the heavens must receive (retain, keep, hold, restrain) Christ in heaven until the times of restitution (restoration) of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy **prophets** since the world began. There are Old and New Testament prophetic scriptures which must be fulfilled before Christ can return. The **prophets** have been given the anointing and responsibility to receive from Christ the proper revelation and application of these Scriptures. They are hidden from the eyes of men until God's time for that truth to be restored and established.

New Age Approaching. The Church is now in the beginning days of the transition from the age of the mortal Church to the Kingdom Age. When God was ready to take His people from the dispensation of the Law to the dispensation of the Church, He commissioned His Spirit to bring enlightenment on Scriptures and revelation knowledge concerning the reality and application of that truth. Peter received illumination to perceive that Gentiles could become Christians without becoming Jews first. This was revolutionary revelation knowledge to Peter and all the rest of the apostles. Paul received the revelation knowledge to understand the mystery of the one Body of Christ, the Church. In his letter to the Ephesian church he explained to them that they had been birthed and built upon the foundational ministries of the apostle and **prophet** (Apostle Paul and **Prophet** Silas) with Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone. They were being built together as a holy temple in the Lord, and as the corporate Body of Christ in order for God to have a habitation and headquarters here on earth. All of this was to be accomplished through the Holy Spirit. This was a revolutionary new concept and a major departure from all that the Jewish theologians had ever taught.

Revelation Required to Bring Restoration. Paul justified his teaching not only with Old Testament Scriptures, but also upon the authority of the "Spirit of revelation" and the office of the apostle and **prophet**. He states: "A dispensation of the grace of God has been given to me for you" and "by revelation He made known unto me the mystery of the corporate body of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is *NOW* revealed unto His holy Apostles and **prophets** by the Spirit" Eph.2:19-22; 3:1-6). Ephesians 3:5 reveals that apostles as well as **prophets** now have the ministry of revealing new truth to the Church.

We are not saying that **prophets** and apostles need to write new Scriptures here in the twentieth century. The Bible is complete and needs no additions. But the Bible was prophetically inspired, and it requires prophetic Holy Spirit illumination and revelation to understand and apply it rightly. For instance, Martin Luther read the Scripture "The just shall live by faith" and Ephesians 2:8-9 hundreds of times before the Spirit of revelation made known to him the reality of its meaning. When it did dawn upon him, it ushered in the Protestant Reformation. A true revelation always brings a revolutionary change. Martin Luther did not invent or prophesy new Scriptures but received a true revelation about that which had already been written by former apostles and **prophets**.

The same was true for the Holiness movement, the Pentecostal movement, and the Charismatic movement. We are reading Scriptures right now that soon the Holy Spirit will illuminate and activate into full reality. The ascension gift office of the **prophet** has the special anointing for this ministry.

Time for Final "Tidal Wave" Restoration Movement. There have been four major restorational movements during the last 470 years, and several little waves of restorational truths in between. The **company of the prophets** will bring revelation and activation of the greatest restorational movement ever recorded. It will be greater than all four previous movements

rolled into one. It will be as revolutionary as the change from Judaism to Christianity and from the Dark Ages to the Protestant Reformation. As the final revelations on the last Scriptures to be fulfilled are illuminated and activated it will create a tidal wave of restoration of such proportions that it will fulfill Revelation 11:15 and prepare the way for the second coming of Christ the King Eternal.

The **prophets** prepare the way for the second coming of Christ by bringing revelation knowledge on the Scriptures that must be fulfilled before Christ can return. The Church apostles and **prophets** have been commissioned with that anointing and responsibility. In Rev. 10:7 and 11:15, when the seventh angel has finished sounding, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord [Jesus] and of his Christ [anointed one — the Church]." "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the **prophets**." Nothing will take the Church by surprise as long as God's **prophets** are alive and active in the Church. For "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the **prophets**." (Amos 3:7)

Greatest Sign of the Century. The theologians who look to Israel as their signpost for the nearness of the coming of the Lord proclaim the day Israel became a state as the greatest sign of the twentieth century. Those who look to the Church for the signs of the nearness of the coming of the Lord can proclaim the restoration of the **prophet** ministry and the **company of prophets** as the greatest sign of the nearness of His coming in this century. John the Baptist was the greatest sign ever given that the Messiah was at hand, but the religious scribes and Pharisaic theologians could not discern God's greatest sign of the time. Likewise, the majority of denominational ministers will not recognize the greatest sign of the century, the **Elijah company of prophets** that the Holy Spirit is raising up to make

the proper preparation for the coming of our King Jesus and His dominion over all the earth. Jesus was already on earth while the **prophet** was preparing the way for His manifestation as the Messiah. The kingdom of God is already on the earth within the Church awaiting the final revelation of the mystery of God to be finished as revealed by the **prophets**. Yes, the kingdom of God within the Church is awaiting the final sounding of the trumpet of the seventh angel so that final action can be taken to make the kingdoms of this world the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ. No wonder Jesus is so excited about the restoration of the **prophets**, for they are preparing the way for His return and for His literal kingdom to be established over all creation (Lu. 11:2; 17:21; Rev. 11:15).

PROPHETS PREPARE THE CHURCH TO BE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

The **prophets** not only are to prepare the way of the Lord; they are also "to make ready a people for the Lord." John the Baptist could not have fulfilled that prophecy in its entirety, for that "people" is the Church. Peter describes the Church as a people which "were not a people, but are now the people of God," "a peculiar people." These people are a people that have been purchased by the blood of Jesus. Paul told the elders to "feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood," and that "Jesus loved the Church and gave Himself for the Church 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." His blood cleanses, but it requires the ministry of the **prophet** and the other fivefold ministries "to make ready a people for the Lord" (Lu. 1:17; I Pe. 2:9, 10; Acts 20:28; Ep. 5:25-27).

The Church Is the Bride of Christ and must be properly prepared, clothed and made ready for her wedding day. Jesus is coming for a Bride to enter into a joint-heir reign with Him over all His vast domain. The Church Bride cannot be an undeveloped

little girl or an old wrinkled woman. She must be in the prime of beauty and performance. The Church-Bride must be fully clothed with her wedding garments, which are the garment of salvation, the robe of righteousness, the garment of praise, the armour of God; and fully equipped with her weapons of warfare, which are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Her sword is the Word of God, which is made sharp by the revelation knowledge provided by the **prophets**.

John described the Bride of Christ as portrayed in the new Jerusalem "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," and the angel said, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Jesus is not marrying a gem city but rather a living body made up of redeemed saints who have been conformed to His own image and likeness. Isaiah prophesied about the Church, the Sons of God, becoming the bride of Christ. "For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee (Is. 62:5). Hosea prophesied that the day would come when the Lord would betroth His people unto Himself in righteousness and grace. Paul proclaimed to the Corinthian Christians that he had betrothed them to one husband that he might present them as a chaste virgin to Christ (Ho. 2:19, 20; I Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-33; Re. 19:7-8; 20:2, 9).

The **prophets** are being brought forth to fulfill their part in preparing the Bride-Church for her day of presentation to her heavenly Bridegroom, Christ Jesus. Jesus is rejoicing with great joy over the part the **prophets** are playing in preparing His Bride. When the **prophets** have finished their ministry, He will be released to descend from heaven with a shout and be fully and eternally united with His Bride. Twentieth century church **prophets** are very precious to Christ, for they are perfecting the Bride He died to purchase, the Church. Christ says, woe to those who hinder His true **prophets** from fulfilling their part in preparing His Bride for presentation to Him in perfect purity and maturity. The Church-Bride of Christ cannot be fully

perfected without the full restoration of the ministry of the apostles and **prophets** (Ep. 4:11, 12).

Prophets Activate Church Members Into Their Membership Ministry. **Prophets** and the prophetic presbytery have the divinely gifted ability to activate the gifts and talents of the saints and ministers by the laying on of hands and prophecy. They have the ability from God to reveal and confirm those with a call to fivefold ministry. The **prophet** has the ability to reveal to saints their membership ministry in the Body of Christ. This ministry can function while he is a team member with other apostles and **prophets** in a prophetic presbytery or individually in the office of the **prophet**.

The apostle, **prophet**, evangelist, pastor and teacher were given special ability from Christ to perfect, equip and mature the saints. Though all five must be able to teach, preach, prophesy and minister in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, yet each has a special unique anointing and ability that the others do not possess. This book was written to clarify and magnify the office of the **prophet** and the ministry of personal prophecy.

The author does not want the reader to develop the attitude that the **prophet** is more important than the other four. All five are absolutely necessary, anointed and appointed of God for the Church. There has been much written about, and a general understanding of the offices of pastor, evangelist and teacher. Yet there has been very little written concerning the **prophet**. There is even less acceptance and understanding of twentieth-century Church **prophets**. For these reasons space is only given here to explain the unique ability and anointing of the **prophet**. In relation to our subject, the **prophet** is the one that has been given the special ability for activating saints into their membership ministry. Christ has given **prophets** His ability to know God's gifts and callings in a person's life. This is not always active in the **prophet**, any more than an evangelist knows which ones are going to be saved when he preaches the gospel. The **prophet's** perception in this area is a higher and more

anointed function than the gift of the word of knowledge operating in a saint, just the same as a **prophet** prophesying carries a greater anointing than that of a saint prophesying by the Holy Spirit's gift of prophecy.

The **prophet's** divine enablements are more than gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are the very abilities and graces of Christ Himself. An anointed church member may discern by a word of knowledge that another member has a certain gift or calling, but that does not carry with it the power to perform. It only brings revelation knowledge. When the **prophet** lays hands on and prophesies gifts and callings to a person, his words have the Christ-gifted creative ability to impart, birth, and activate that ministry into the member. If the person receiving the prophetic word does not receive it in faith, it will be a birthing, but it will be stillborn. If the person does not minister to that word of prophecy it can become malnourished and never reach maturity and life within the individual. There are many other things as well which can hinder a true-anointed prophet's prophecy from coming to pass in an individual's life and ministry. These hindrances are addressed in another chapter.

The whole Body of Christ will only be built up to full stature and maturity in Christ as every member in the Body is functioning fully in his or her membership ministry. Ephesians 4:16 declares that the Body of Christ is held together by that which every joint supplies, and as each member does its part fully, the body increases and builds itself into a mature, fully functioning body. The **prophet** through his prophesying reveals to members their part to play and helps them to interrelate properly with other members. Ephesians 4:12 declares that the **prophet** and the other four have the primary ministry of equipping the saints with this knowledge and ability so that they can enter into their ministry, thereby causing the whole Body of Christ to be matured.

Christ cannot return until His ascension gift ministries have brought the Church into full manhood. The pastor, evangelist

and teacher have been the only ones acknowledged as being active in this role. But now Christ is activating His prophets in the 1980's and His apostles in the 1990's. Jesus is thrilled at the thought that His prophets will soon be fully recognized and accepted by His Church. When this happens it will escalate the approach of the consummation of the ages. It will accelerate the "making ready a people for the Lord" so that He can return. It is the prophesying of the prophets that brings the Church from a disorganized Valley of Dry Bones to a unified coming together with growth and maturity until the Church arises as an exceeding great and mighty army of the Lord (Ez. 37:1-14).

3

THE NATURE OF PROPHECY: SOME DEFINITIONS

In its most broad meaning, prophecy is simply God communicating His thoughts and intents to mankind. When a true prophecy is given, the Holy Spirit inspires someone to communicate God's pure and exact words to the individual or group for whom they are intended. It is delivered without any additions or subtractions by the one prophesying, including any applications or interpretations suggested by the one speaking. To be most effective, it must also be delivered in God's timing and with the proper spirit or attitude.

The prophetic message is usually given vocally. But it may also be written down or acted out symbolically. Prophecy may come to a person as God speaks directly to him, or the Lord may use another person to convey the message.

THE BIBLE AS PROPHECY

In this sense the whole Bible can rightly be called prophecy—that is, God communicating His thoughts and intents to mankind. The entire Scripture is one inspired revelation of God's mind, will, and word communicated to man and written on paper: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (2 Tim. 3:16). "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will

of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21. See also Dt. 6:32; Rev. 1).

The Bible Is God's Complete Revelation to Man. These inspired words were gathered into sixty-six books and canonized into the Scriptures, the Word of God, the Holy Bible. This prophetic Word is thus complete. It is perfect, fully sufficient to bring all the revelation of God that we can comprehend and appropriate. No further prophetic communication from God is to be added to it and none may be used to subtract from the Bible. Any truly prophetic word given today must therefore be in full agreement with the spirit and context of the Bible.

If this is the case, then, many will ask why we need prophecy at all in the twentieth-century Church. The answer to this question requires first of all that we understand the meaning of two important words from Biblical Greek.

LOGOS — RHEMA

Two Greek words in the New Testament are translated by the English term "word": Logos and rhema. Greek scholars and Biblical theologians have debated about whether or not these words are synonymous, but many believe that the inspired writers chose each word to express a different meaning. The interpretation we present here is more consistent with those scholars who are walking in present truth.

When we use the word "Logos," we refer to the "Word [Logos] of truth," the Scriptures, the Holy Bible (2 Tim. 2:15). St. John also speaks of the "Word" that was in the beginning, that was with God, that was God, and that was made flesh and dwelt among us—none other than our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was the eternal Word revealed and manifest in mortal flesh (Jn. 1:1, 14).

The Logos of God. This Logos Word is settled forever in heaven. Earth and heaven may pass away, but this Word will never pass away. That part of Scripture which is a description of the Word personage, character, plan, and eternal purpose will

never fail, for it is the very expression of God Himself. The Logos is the same as God: the same yesterday, today, and forever.

God's Logos, is creative, self-fulfilling, powerful, true, inerrant, infallible, complete, and life-giving. It is trustworthy and sure. Any seeming failure or inconsistency in it is due to our failure in understanding, believing, responding, obeying, and seeking to fulfill that unailing word.

The Logos — God's Eternal Standard. The Logos is the consistent, absolute standard by which all other expressions, concepts, revelations, doctrines, preachings, and prophecies are measured. The Logos reveals God and portrays His eternal principles and decrees. Neither angel, nor human, nor devil, nor any other power in the whole universe can keep the Logos from eternally being and becoming all it proclaims.

Rhema — Word. The rhema, on the other hand, might be called "a word from the Word." W.E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* explains it this way: "*Rhema* denotes that which is spoken, what is uttered in speech and writing: in the singular, a word. The significance of rhema (as distinct from Logos) is exemplified in the injunction to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (rhema) of God" (Eph. 6:17). Here the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with scripture" (W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, Nashville, Tennessee, Nelson, 1939, p. 1242).

A rhema, then, is that timely, Holy Spirit-inspired Word from the Logos that brings life, power, and faith to perform and fulfill it: "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word [rhema] of God" (Rom. 10:17). The rhema must be received with faith by the hearer in order for it to fulfill its mission.

Logos Prophecy vs. Rhema Prophecy. The Logos never changes nor fails, but the Bible is full of rhemas given to individuals which failed to come to pass. Actually, however, in these cases it was not the rhema of the Lord which failed, but rather the people who heard it failed to understand, interpret, believe, obey, respond, wait upon, or act upon it according to God's will and way. This is the meaning of I Corinthians 13:8: "Prophecies shall fail." When God speaks directly or through a prophet to a person or a nation, and they fail to respond appropriately, the prophecy may not come to pass.

To summarize: When we use the term "Logos," we mean the Scriptures as a whole. When we use "rhema," we mean a specific word from the Lord that applies it to us individually. No true rhema spoken by a present-day prophet will be in conflict with the spirit and context of the Logos.

The Logos is like a well of water, and the rhema is a bucket of water from that well. The Logos is like an entire piano, and the rhema is one note sounding forth from it. The Logos is like the whole human body, and the rhema is one of that body's members performing a particular function. The rhema is always dependent on the Logos: The body can continue to survive without certain members, but no member can survive without the body.

We all must thank God for the Logos, which is the standard of all truth. But we should also be grateful for the rhema, which provides the precise word needed for the specific situation. All Christians must live by the Logos and receive the rhema as needed.

Personal Prophecy Defined. Given this distinction between the Logos and the rhema, we can now define a **personal prophecy**. When we use this term, we mean God's revelation of His thoughts and intents to a particular person, family, or group of people. It is specific information coming from the mind of God for a specific situation, an inspired word directed to a certain audience.

Personal Prophecy and Rhema. In the broad sense, then, personal prophecy is a rhema: God's Word individually applied, a word which is subordinate to the Logos. This more specific revelation of God's will for our individual lives may come by many ways. A rhema may come while reading the Bible, as God quickens a certain text, or it may come to us through the spoken words of another person.

Personal Prophecy Spoken — Rhema Inward Revelation. We will normally use the term **personal prophecy**, however, in a more narrow sense in order to distinguish between divine communications which come straight to us from God and those which come through another human vessel. **Personal prophecy** is what we will call an individual word coming to someone through another human being. **Rhema** is what we will call a word communicated directly by God. This will help us avoid the misunderstanding that we are endorsing the rather dangerous practice of some people who give themselves "personal prophecies."

Personal Work of Holy Spirit but not Personal Prophecy. The Holy Spirit convicting an individual of sin, and wooing and regenerating that person, is a personal, individual experience, yet it is the same work the Holy Spirit must do to make any sinner into a saint. In a similar way, the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit to bring out the deeper and greater meaning of Scripture is a personal event. But in our use of terms, these situations are rhemas rather than personal prophecy.

General Prophecy in the Bible. Much of the Bible is general prophecy: Scriptures which reveal God's glory, nature, and character; passages which give instructions which are applicable to all mankind; prophetic utterances which deal with general conditions of the world and with the general degeneration of unregenerate man; prophecy about the restoration of the Church and the end times; doctrine dealing with sin, repentance, and faith.

Rhema Scriptures Give Truth by Illustration. At the same time, the Bible contains a number of personal prophecies which were given to individuals or groups, and are not universally valid. For example, God's personal prophecy to Noah about building the Ark is not instructions to anyone else (Gen. 6). God's word to Abraham about killing Isaac and offering him as a sacrifice is not directed to present-day Christians (Gen. 22). Jacob's prophetic words concerning each of his son's descendants was specific to them (Gen. 49). And Hosea's prophetic instructions to go marry a harlot (Hosea 1:2) are certainly not for us!

Rhema — Personal Prophecy Scriptures Must Not Be Applied Personally Today. The Bible, in fact, contains countless examples of how God gives personal prophecies to individuals and groups. Even a person with only a little instruction in Biblical interpretation knows that these specific instructions are not for everyone. Imagine if a young Christian read in the Bible that God told Isaiah to "walk naked and barefoot in Israel for three years," and then proceeded to do the same in his own city. He might claim, "God told me to do it — it's in the Bible; it's the Word of God!" But no authority, religious or secular, would agree with him. In order to divide rightly the word of truth, then, we must be able to distinguish between the rhema of personal prophecy in the Bible and the general word which is the eternal Logos for everyone.

UNDERSTANDING "PROPHECY" AND "PERSONAL" PROPHECY

(by Rightly Dividing God's Prophetic Book the Bible, Which is God's Written Logos/Rhema Word)

"LOGOS" WORD VS. "RHEMA" WORD

Jn.1:1,14; 2 Tim.3:16 Ro. 10:8,17; Ep.6:17; 2 Co. 13:1

The "Logos" Word	A "Rhema" word
The Word of God	A word from the word
General prophecies	Personal prophecies
Unconditional prophecies	Conditional prophecies
Thy Word is truth	A true word of God
Truth by declaration	Truth by illustration
Eternal Word—God—Jesus	The word speaking specific
Word, same for all eternity	word for person, time
Instructions for all people	Instructions for one person
Unchangeable, unfulfilling	Can fail or be changed
The revelation of God	God revealing and relating
God's prophetic Word	Word being prophesied
The wisdom of God	A word of wisdom
The knowledge of God	A word of knowledge
God's thoughts written	One thought personalized
The whole Bible	Individual scriptures
The throne of God	A thought from the throne

"Logos" -ILLUSTRATIONS- "Rhema"

The whole human body	One member manifesting
The complete piano	A note sounding forth
The ocean	A wave of ocean water
The sandy seashore	A scoop of that sand
A well of water	Bucket of well water

39 O.T. Books and 27 N.T. Books = 66 Books of THE BIBLE
 correlated in the 3rd century into one Book called The Holy
 Scriptures - the inspired written Word of God — the Logos.

4

DIVINE HEALING AND PERSONAL PROPHECY

This chapter is placed here to give present-day life experiences in personal prophecy, especially in relation to divine healing. There are seven such chapters (Chps. 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15 and 19) which give personal examples of how personal prophecy can minister to every area of life.

Jesus Christ received thirty-nine stripes and suffered indescribable pain to provide healing for our mortal bodies. God supernaturally heals and delivers through several means: the prayer of faith by elders of the church; individuals' direct faith in God; the gifts of healings working through a church member or minister; believing the preaching of the word of faith; and the prophetic word of a prophet which brings deliverance, healing, and creative miracles. This last method is of special interest to us here. What part can personal prophecy play in miraculous healings?

Personal prophecy is not designed to reveal whether God is able or willing to heal. That has been fully substantiated and revealed by the Logos, the written Word of God. All present-truth churches have been practicing divine faith healing ever since the Holy Spirit restored this truth back to the Church in the

1880's. ("Present Truth churches" is what I call those who are believing and practicing all truth which has been restored up to the present time.) Much new truth has been restored since the 1880's, and faith healing has increased to include the practice of laying on hands for healing, mass healings, words of knowledge revealing and then healing, gifts of healing, and now healing through a rhema or personal prophecy.

It was not till 1979 that I started receiving prophecies from other prophets about healing and miracles taking place in my ministry. Because I had not seen as many miracles in physical healing as I had in the revelation knowledge realm, I assumed that this was not my gift or calling. But after ten to fifteen different prophecies from ministers from different parts of the world concerning God's desire for me to move into the healing realm, I started believing and expecting miraculous healings to take place. Since that time I have seen healings of heart problems, cancer, and numerous other physical problems. I knew the prophetic word was tremendously effective for inner healing, but I had to realize it could be just as effective for bodily healing.

Biblical and pastoral counseling is a vital ministry of the Church for inner healing, and personal prophecy does not replace the need for it. Nevertheless, I have seen God use one flow of a prophetic word to discern the root cause of a problem and speak an anointed word that brings a deliverance to set the person free immediately and permanently.

More can be accomplished by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the prophet's word and anointing in five minutes than can often be accomplished in numerous hours of normal Biblical counseling. Present truth counselors are now incorporating the gifts of the Holy Spirit and prophetic perception and anointing into their Biblical counseling. This makes it truly *biblical* counseling, because it is beyond anything a trained psychiatrist or psychologist can do with only human wisdom and ability.

I have heard many personal prophecies concerning individuals being healed and delivered which were confirmed by miraculous healings and miracles. Yet, sad to say, I have heard more personal prophecies and rhemas about people getting healed and being raised from their deathbed that failed to come to pass than those which did. So I am very careful about prophesying that a sick person is going to get well and not die, or that a cripple is going to walk, unless I receive a definite rhema word from the Lord.

Probably more prejudice against personal prophecy has come from presumptuous words being given in this area than any other. Why do so many un-inspired personal prophecies come forth in this area? How can numerous people give words that a prominent minister who has cancer is going to be healed and live and not die, and yet he dies anyway?

The main cause of this problem is that the person often prophesies from the Logos and not from a rhema. In other words, they prophesy their doctrine and strong convictions in the Bible, which gives God's general will that divine healing is for all. We can preach, confess, quote and stand on the Logos, but we cannot make it into a personal prophecy to an individual unless the Holy Spirit has quickened it into a rhema.

This insight is clarified by comparison to a more basic truth. The Bible declares that Jesus died so that all men may be saved. Technically, everyone was saved when Jesus died on the cross, but that does not mean that everyone is saved or ever will be saved. I cannot go out and prophesy to just anyone, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, you are cleansed from all sin and born again," just because of my strong belief in the vicarious death of Jesus Christ. I can preach to anyone and say, "If you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, I can assure you that his blood will cleanse you from all sin, and you will be born again."

In the same way, we can preach to a person that God's Word declares that by His stripes we are healed, and Jesus already healed us when He received those thirty-nine stripes, in the

same way He saved us when He shed His blood on Calvary. But we cannot *prophecy*. "Thus saith the Lord, You are healed of this disease and you shall not die but live," unless God makes that biblical truth a personal rhema for that particular situation. In this sense, there is a big difference between preaching and personal prophecy; between quoting the Logos and speaking a rhema; between speaking faith statements based on scriptural truth and speaking the specific mind of the Lord for that individual; between speaking *the* Word of God and speaking *a* word from the Lord.

Truth is truth, and the Logos and rhema are one with God. But Paul declared that faith for specific miracles comes not from our opinions of the Logos but rather from a rhema from the Logos: "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the rhema of God" (Rom. 10:17). He declared that the word spoken from our mouth has to come from our heart as a rhema in order to be effective: "The rhema is nigh thee even in your heart and mouth, that is the rhema of faith" (Rom. 10:8). The Bible gives the factual knowledge of God, His Word, Will and Way, His plan and purpose for mankind. Fact, however, is not faith. But, fact (Scripture) can become faith when it is quickened by the Holy Spirit and mixed with heart belief.

The writer of Hebrews revealed this truth when he said, "The word [Logos] did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4:2). The Logos plus the Holy Spirit quickening and faith equals a rhema from the Lord. As a *minister I preach the Logos*, but as a *prophet I prophecy the rhema*. General biblical truth does not guarantee specific application and appropriation of that truth. A preacher speaks from the letter of the Word which applies to all men for all time, while the prophet speaks from the Spirit of the Word which is personalized to a particular person for a specific situation.

Too often, however, a person speaks from his personal conviction of the scriptural truth of divine healing, yet presents it in the form of a rhema or personal prophecy by saying, "God

showed me you are going to be healed," or "Thus saith the Lord, I have healed you and you shall live and not die." If the person is not healed from this disease but dies, then that word given is counted as false, even though divine healing is a scriptural truth. This is the main reason so many words given as a personal prophecy or rhema fail to come to pass. These doctrinally-directed, instead of divinely inspired, prophecies bring reproach upon the ministry of personal prophecy.

Some of the same problems listed in a later chapter on "Hindrances to Receiving Personal Prophecies" can also hinder people from *giving* a true personal prophecy. The main problems are mindset, soul blockage and doctrinal domination that keep us from being Holy Spirit-directed. I would strongly suggest that if you are emotionally involved or have strong personal opinions about a situation, you should abstain from giving a rhema or personal prophecy on the matter. Introduce your words instead with "My strong conviction is...I believe that...I am convinced that you will...The Bible declares that..." Do not publicly declare, "Thus says the Lord...God told me... God showed me...The Holy Spirit revealed to me..."

Leave the "Thus saith the Lord" to the mature, proven prophets. They are the ones who are anointed to speak a creative word of healing and miraculous deliverance. Even if a saint or non-prophet minister feels assured that they have a true word from the Lord on the matter, it is still greater wisdom to say, "I am convinced that God is going to..." rather than to say, "God showed me that He will..." It will build the faith of others just as much, and if it works as you confessed it would then you will get credit that your convictions were right. If it does not happen as you believed and confessed it would, then you will not be subject to being called a false prophet or prophetess. Rather you will simply have spoken what you believed to be the truth on the matter.

No one who believes in divine healing will blast you for believing and confessing your convictions on divine healing,

even when you direct it to a specific person's healing. But if you put your convictions in the form of rhema or personal prophecy and it does not come to pass, then you may justly be judged and proclaimed a false representative of the mind of God in the matter. Your presumptuous prophesying will also bring reproach on the gift of prophecy, the ministry of prophesying, and the office of the prophet.

Probably ninety-nine percent of all the healings and miracles I personally know about which happened through personal prophecy occurred when the one prophesying had no prior knowledge of the existing condition. Numerous prophets could give hundreds of testimonies of healing and miracles that have happened in their ministry, and I think all of them would agree with this percentage. Once there is natural knowledge and personal involvement in a situation, it is much, much harder to receive a pure and clear word on the matter. It is much easier to speak a creative word of healing from a Holy Spirit-inspired rhema than from our own beliefs concerning the doctrine of the Logos. I have seen both take place, but by far the majority have come when I speak an inspired rhema in personal prophecy and prophetic praying.

Present-Day Examples. A few testimonies will show how this can work. The first comes from a pastor and his wife who pastored a growing church in the late seventies. This couple had established a CI Extension College in their church, so I ministered there a couple of times a year. I had prophesied over the pastor and his wife each time I was there during those years.

Of the numerous examples that could be given, this story best portrays the problems with personal prophecies in relation to divine healing.

The doctors discovered that the wife had cancer cells in her blood stream, but could not determine their origination without exploratory surgery. We laid hands on her, and God showed me the place in her body where the problem originated. It was in a different spot from where the physicians expected it to be.

She told the surgeons that another doctor (she didn't explain it was a "Doctor of Prophetic Insight") had diagnosed her problem as located in this particular area, and asked them to check that area during exploratory surgery. They could not find a problem where they expected it to be, so they looked where the other doctor had suggested. The source of the cancer cells was discovered. The pastor called and requested prophetic insight as to whether his wife should take the chemotherapy treatments as the doctors requested. God spoke this prophetic word for him to give to her:

"If she takes the chemotherapy treatments she will feel better and the cancer will go into remission for two years, but then it will come back worse than ever. If she will trust God wholly for divine healing, she will suffer for awhile and have to battle through in faith, but will be completely healed within two years."

I do not know how clearly he conveyed that word to his wife, no more than I know how clearly Adam conveyed God's instructions to his wife concerning God's word about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But the next time I heard from them, she was taking the treatments and gaining some relief. The cancer was going into remission.

Two years later I was in a Sunday night service in their church. The pastor's wife was home in bed because the cancer had reactivated and spread so fast that her condition was inoperable. After prayer for her in church, the associate pastor, who had a prophetic call upon his life, stood to his feet and prophesied emphatically and specifically that God would heal her and raise her off that deathbed for His glory, and that it would be a great witness to the surrounding community. A few others were inspired by his prophecy to prophesy words of power and victory and healing, but they did not name her in their prophecies as he did.

My prophetic spirit did not witness that they were prophesying from a rhema or the mind of the Lord on this matter. I felt they

were prophesying from their doctrine of the Logos, love for the pastor's wife, and their zeal to see a miracle manifested. The next morning on the way to the airport we went to her bedside to minister to her. My wife and I prayed and I prophesied to her. There was nothing in the prophetic word about a miraculous healing, though I was personally believing for a prophetic word of miraculous healing and life. There were many words of comfort, and God's assurance concerning her children and husband. She had been in great pain and had become very cantankerous and uncooperative. But after the prophecy, great peace came to her, the joy of the Lord returned, her attitude changed, and the smile she used to have all the time returned.

We were told later that after we left, she began to make restitution with certain people and family members. She arranged the songs and service to have at her home-going. I flew back a few weeks later to preach her funeral, and participated in her home-going service. While there I counseled the young associate pastor who had given the specific prophecy about her healing. He was devastated in his life, reputation, and ability to prophesy the true word of the Lord. But after much counsel and prayer he was able to adjust, renew and press on.

The counseling included thoughts on proper prophetic motivation, hindrances to giving true prophecies, and the need of prophets being trained and under apprenticeship to an older mature prophet—as Elisha was to Elijah—before giving such serious specific words. I reassured him that he was not a false prophet, but rather his immaturity, zeal, and biblical convictions had motivated him to give a presumptuous prophecy. He was to let it be a humbling, learning process to prepare him to be a mature prophet.

This presumptuous prophecy was just one of the many problems that caused the church to go from four hundred to forty people during the next few years. One of the problems was that the pastor became disillusioned and resentful to God over the death of his wife. He began to take his frustrations out on the

people by preaching hard at them instead of ministering to them. I had given him a prophetic word that he should preach for the next six months on the healing virtue of Christ, Christ's victory over all things, and miraculous power. He ignored that word and preached negative thoughts, criticized the people and took his frustrations out in his preaching. He finally left the church after it had dwindled to forty. His son-in-law took it over, and has worked for years to restore the people gradually and to reestablish the work.

Just as true prophecies will bring blessings, prosperity, and miracles, so will immature, presumptuous, and false prophecies bring destruction, confusion, and failure. The answer is not to reject or despise prophets, personal prophecy, and congregational prophesying, but rather to teach, train, and mature the saints and young prophets in the prophetic realm.

One interesting sidelight from this situation came from the dying woman's comments to me. She said:

"Dr. Bill, I have read over all the pages of prophecies that you have given to me over the years, and everything you said I would do has come to pass. I have done and become all that the prophecies said that I would do and be."

I use her situation to encourage people who have portions of their personal prophecies which have not come to pass yet, saying, "Don't become discouraged because all your prophecies have not been fulfilled. Be encouraged, for the only person that ever told me all her prophecies had been fulfilled died within three weeks." If God keeps talking about things you are going to do in years to come, it means that if you are obedient, then you have many years yet to live and do the will of God.

Evangelists who have power gifts can be told what the physical condition is, and they can pray and minister with the gift of healing and word of faith to perform miracles. But they rarely prophesy ahead of time that the person is going to be healed. Most miracles take place through personal prophecy during the time the prophetic word is flowing to the individual.

A couple of present-day testimonies will amplify this truth. **A New Heart.** One young Christian man at the age of twenty-nine was successfully operating four businesses. He had forced himself to work sixteen to twenty hours a day for years to come to this place of success. Though a Christian, he still had continually broken God's laws of rest and temperance, and was now suffering the consequences in his body.

After intensive examinations and tests in the hospital, it was determined that he had a serious heart condition and blood circulation problems. So he had to take strong medications which made him unable to work. The doctor's prognosis was that he would have to be on medication the rest of his life, and have open heart surgery. Five years later, things were no better and his life expectancy was about six months. Let him give you the rest of his testimony in his own words:

I continued on until April 8, 1984. At that time, Dr. Hamon, you were conducting a Holy Spirit Seminar at our church. That night you preached, and at the close of the message you asked all the leadership in the church to come forward and line up across the front. My wife and I went up. (Keep in mind that we had never seen or heard of you before this.)

You laid hands on us and started to prophesy. You prophesied many things that I had gone through, and many things about what God was going to do in my life and ministry. Right in the middle of the flow of your prophesying, without asking me if I had any physical problems, you began to speak, "Heal him, Lord, heal him, Lord, give him a new heart, give him a new circulatory system."

I fell to the floor, and the power of God began to surge throughout my body. I instantly knew that God had restored my health. For over an hour afterwards I could feel the blood circulating in the ends of my fingers and toes. It felt like something was washing out my entire circulatory system.

A few months later I had a physical, and the doctors verified that there were no signs of my ever having had a heart or circulatory problem. So I poured the medicine out and filled the bottles with olive oil to anoint people for prayer and to testify about my healing.

One year later I had an opportunity to give my testimony at one of your prophet seminars. That was on Thursday night, and the next night I was playing softball with the church team. Suddenly, I began to experience extreme pain in my chest and down my left arm. I began to double over with pain. I thought I would have to be carried off the field, but in a few minutes the pain left as suddenly as it had come.

The following Sunday, I was telling my pastor about what had happened and he informed me that he was at the CI Seminar on that Friday night. He stated that you had suddenly stopped right in the middle of the service and revealed that God was showing you that the devil was trying right then to put the heart condition back on the man who had given his testimony the night before about being healed. You had the people to stand and point in the general direction of Panama City where I lived. You took authority over the enemy and commanded him to leave permanently. We determined that that was exactly the same time I was having the symptoms of a heart attack on the ball field.

From that time in 1984 till now, in 1987, I have had no further symptoms or problems. In fact, I have been issued a life insurance policy as a preferred risk. I praise God that there are prophets in the Church today. The word you gave about me going into spiritual ministry has also come to pass. I have now been ordained and am in spiritual ministry for my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A Vision. In October, 1981, the Lord gave me one of the few visions I have seen in my lifetime. While worshipping at a CI Seminar with eyes closed and hands uplifted to God, I suddenly saw in blazing letters written across my forehead, "Power

over cancer and heart problems." Before I mentioned it to anyone else, a brother came to me and said, "While you were worshipping the Lord, I looked at you and saw written across your forehead in large red letters, 'Power over cancer and heart problems.'" So I accepted it as a true vision, but explained to God that I did not know why He was giving that to me when I could not even find enough time to fulfill my prophet and personal prophecy ministry.

I did not mention this publicly until one night in Pensacola, Florida, when the Holy Spirit prompted me to do so. There was a lady there who had had a battle with recurring cancer for years. As soon as she received a miracle of healing in one area of her body, the cancer would recur in another part of her body. Here is the part of the testimony that deals with her final and complete victory:

Finally, I had cancer in my throat. In desperation, I called out to God and told him I had done and was doing all I knew to do. I really needed help, or I would lose this long fight against cancer.

It was on November 18, 1981, when I called out to God for some answer about why I could not keep my healing. The Holy Spirit impressed me to go to a church on Jackson Street called Amazing Grace. I had no transportation of my own, but God provided a way for me to go.

I had already heard Dr. Bill twice at our church, Liberty Fellowship, in June of 1981. I just knew in my spirit that this was my night for a miracle healing that would last, but I was not prepared for what happened. Dr. Bill said that God had made known that he had given him power over cancer, and if anyone had been diagnosed as having cancer cells in their body to come down for prayer. I was the only one that came forward.

Dr. Bill prayed in the spirit for awhile and then started speaking loud and authoritatively, "Father, we smite this cancer now, and curse the very root cause in the name of

Jesus. I tear you loose from the root, come out, set her free, loose her, come out now and go from her forever."

That foul spirit that had been reactivating cancer in my body for the last seven years screamed out of me and tore at my body, but you spoke out again for him to harass me no longer, but be gone from me forever. Thank God he left, I was healed completely, and I am still healed after all these years—and will continue to be.

I thank God that our Lord Jesus has given men power in His name to deliver His people from the destructive forces of the enemy. Thank you for being obedient and speaking out that night. I am finally completely set free of recurring cancer. Praise God!

I have prayed for many people with cancer and heart problems. Very few are healed when the request is made and we simply respond in obedience to the commands of the Logos. But almost everyone is healed when the need is made known by revelation knowledge and prophetic praying.

Because Jesus healed everyone that came to Him, those who minister divine healing become frustrated that they do not see everyone healed. But Jesus was the only one who had fullness of the Spirit, faith, and power. We minister according to our divinely gifted abilities, which come far short of sufficient faith to heal all with whom we come in contact. Nevertheless, we will continue to exercise all the faith and anointing for healing and miracles we have, continually believing for greater miracles and a higher percentage of positive results. This much we do know and have proven over and over again: Personal prophecy and prophetic praying, when divinely directed, bring miraculous results within those who receive the ministry.

5

FIVE CHANNELS OF PROPHECY

In addition to Scripture (and always subordinate to it), God's prophetic word to His people usually comes through one of five channels. To understand how God communicates to us prophetically, we must know the differences between them. These are the five:

THE OFFICE OF PROPHET (Eph. 2:20; 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28; Acts 13:1)

The ministry of the prophet in the Church is not a gift of the Holy Spirit, but a gift-extension of Christ Himself as the Prophet. Jesus Christ was the full manifestation of the offices of Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor and Teacher all in one human body. After His ascension into Heaven, the fivefold ministry He had embodied on earth was sent back as gifts to the Church in the form of men who filled those offices. No one person received all five, but some received one (Eph. 4:11).

This gifting was not an external endowment like a birthday present. Instead, it was an investment of Christ's mantle for one of the five ministries of Jesus—a divine impartation of Christ's own nature, wisdom, and power for each particular kind of performance. All five, when moving in full maturity, represent Christ's full ministry to the Church. These ministries are not

just an extension of Body ministry, but an extension of the headship of Christ to His Body, the Church.

The one gifted as an apostle received that portion of Christ's mantle that enabled Jesus to be the great Apostle of the faith. The evangelist received Christ's evangelistic anointing. The pastor was given Christ's Good Shepherd heart and staff, and the teacher, Christ's divine teaching ability. Finally, the prophet received those attributes of Christ that endowed Him with the ability to perceive what was in the heart of people, to proclaim the future counsels and purposes of God, and to know the secret things of God.

The office of the prophet is designed and endowed to function in a higher realm of ministry than the Holy Spirit's gift of prophecy. This gift of prophecy operates within the saints or a minister for the general upbuilding, encouraging, and comforting of the Church (1 Cor. 12:10; 14:3, 4). But the office of prophet is authorized and anointed to do much more.

The prophet, in fact, has administrative authority. The prophet has the same authority to minister to the church with his preaching and prophesying as the pastor does with his preaching and pastoral counseling. Church prophets function in all the ministries of the Old Testament prophets, as well as the New Testament gift of the prophet standing in the role of Christ, the Prophet. Thus their prophecies flow in the areas of guidance, instruction, rebuke, judgment, and revelation—whatever Christ chooses to speak for the purifying and perfecting of His Church.

Prophets, then, are more than pastors speaking with the gift of prophecy. In the New Testament Church structure they are secondary only to the apostles: "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets..." (1 Cor. 12:28). Paul tells us that the ministries of apostles and prophets are foundational to the building of Christ's Church (Eph. 2:20-22). They are a direct extension of the "Cornerstone," Jesus, to give alignment and proper structure to God's building, the Church. So any local church which is established without an apostle or

prophet ministry will not have a proper foundation for maximum growth.

Prophets have been active in the Church during its nearly twenty centuries of existence, but after the Church fell into apostasy they ceased to be recognized as such, especially by the generation to whom they ministered. But I believe the time has come when Christ Jesus is determined to bring recognition to His prophets. All fivefold ministries must be restored to the Church before it can be ready for Christ's return (Acts 3:21).

The prophets are especially anointed to perceive what is next on God's agenda for restoration. Then they lift their voices like trumpets to alert, enlighten, and charge the Church to conquer that part of the truth to be restored at that time. The prophets are the eyes of the body of Christ, the trumpeters in the army of the Lord to give a clear sound revealing the desires of the Commander-in-Chief.

I believe that the decade of the 1980's has been designated in the counsels of God as the time for the calling forth of the prophet ministry. Before the 1980's are over, God will have raised up and called forth thousands of prophets. Their ministry will be clarified and amplified until all the present-truth church world recognizes them as ordained by God and gifts of God to the Church. They will no longer be denied and ignored, but rather accepted and activated into their full, anointed authority within the office of prophet. For the Holy Spirit has been commissioned by Christ, the Head of the Church, to bring forth and prepare the prophets for their day of presentation and performance.

Christ declared that Elijah, the prophet, must first come before He Himself could be fully manifest in His role as Messiah. John the Baptist fulfilled that prophecy for Christ's first coming. The emerging company of prophets with the prophetic mantle of Elijah will prepare the way for Christ's second coming in full manifestation of His ministry as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The cry of the Holy Spirit is for

prophets to come forth. The Church is crying out for holy and truly God-anointed prophets. And the prophets are coming, for the Spirit and the Bride are now saying, "Come!"

PROPHETIC PREACHING (1 Pet. 4:11)

Preaching and prophesying are not the same thing. Preaching is normally speaking biblical truths which have been researched, studied, and arranged for presentation. Prophecy is normally extemporaneous, by divine inspiration and revelation knowledge. Preaching proclaims the Logos, while prophecy gives a rhema from the Logos. Both are the word of God.

Prophetic preaching is not the same as simply getting the mind of the Lord about which sermon to preach on Sunday, or being anointed to preach a specially prepared message from the Bible. It is a different realm altogether. Any one of the fivefold ministries (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher — Eph.4:11) may at times enter into prophetic ministry as he preaches.

Such prophetic preaching from biblical truths is the direct voice of God with the pure mind of Christ, so that even the speaker's precise words and illustrations are exactly what God wants to say to the people present in that place at that time. Though the minister does not preface his statements with "Thus saith the Lord," the words are just as inspired and anointed as if a prophet were to speak using that phrase. Prophetic preaching is the "oracle of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

THE PROPHETIC PRESBYTERY (1 Tim. 4:14; Heb. 6:1-2; Acts 13:1-3)

A third channel for prophetic ministry is the laying on of hands with prophecy by men and women of God who meet the qualifications of presbyter. The presbytery serves several functions in this regard, each one calling for a different set of qualifications both in the presbyters and in the candidates:

1. **Prophetic revelation and confirmation** of those called to leadership ministry in the church.

2. **Ordination to the fivefold ministry.** This is the laying on of hands for authorization and recognition as an ordained minister of God.
3. **Confirmation and activation** of membership ministries in the body of Christ.
4. **Progress** in Christian maturity.

We will trace these functions in detail in another volume of this series, but for now we should note that the laying on of hands is the fourth of the six doctrines of Christ which a person must experience to go on to maturity (Heb. 6:1-2). Every Christian needs the blessing and benefits of laying on of hands and prophecy by God-anointed and leadership-appointed ministry in the Church.

We should also note that the prophetic presbytery does not eliminate the need for the individual office of prophet. All ministers and others in church leadership can exercise their faith and speak a word of prophecy over an individual while functioning as a presbytery team member. But only a prophet can minister in that prophetic realm ordained for the office of the prophet.

The prophet's ministry is, in fact, ordained to function in all the realms of the prophetic presbytery, as well as to fulfill the office of prophet. Prophets are anointed to do on an individual basis all that the prophetic presbytery does as a team.

One difference, however, is that the prophetic presbytery is given the honor of extending formal and final ordination to a ministry. The prophet may reveal a person's call to fivefold ministry, and lay hands upon him to anoint him for it. But ordination is performed by the presbytery.

In the Old Testament there were two groups which recognized and anointed men for leadership ministry. The first, the Aaronic priesthood, laid on hands for ordaining Levites and priests. Both the priests and their candidates had to meet a number of stipulations and requirements in this process.

The other group to recognize and anoint leadership was the prophets. They did not have the same system of restrictions as the priests; the prophets simply spoke to the one God pointed out. They called out and anointed whomever God indicated without regard to any other factor. An example of such a choice is provided in Samuel's anointing of David for kingship—a youth in his early teens.

These two Old Testament groups have their counterparts in the Church. The prophetic presbytery is parallel to the Aaronic priesthood. Like that ancient priesthood, many church leaders have established numerous requirements for leadership. These stipulations are not necessarily found in Scripture, but they are sound guidelines developed over the years.

The modern-day prophets are parallel to those of the Old Testament. They, too, function without the restrictions of the “priesthood” presbytery. Today's prophetic presbytery would not even consider a young man like David for candidacy for prophetic presbytery, but a church prophet might nevertheless call him out of the congregation, lay hands on him, prophesy his calling, and anoint him for that ministry. The prophetic presbytery (after the Aaronic priesthood order which was restored in 1948) would not allow themselves to prophesy to a thirteen-year-old that he is called to be an apostle (king). But the prophet is free to follow the leading of the Lord without the limitations and restrictions of the prophetic presbytery.

Every minister needs to be anointed properly with formal ordination to their ascension gift ministry. Every saint needs a prophetic presbytery for membership ministry, confirmation, and activation. The prophetic presbytery is a vital ministry in the New Testament Church.

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY (Acts 2:17; 1 Cor. 12:10; 14:1, 3, 4, 6, 22, 24, 31, 39; 1 Thess. 5:20; Rom. 12:6)

Prophecy is one of the nine manifestations of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12. Verse 7 declares that the manifestation is given; it is a gift, a grace, an unmerited divine enablement.

It is not given on the basis of Christian maturity, but because Christ wants to bless His Church through this gift and the others. So these gifts are received and administered by grace and faith.

The Holy Spirit has all nine gifts, but He distributes them to individual saints as He wills. He has willed that every born-again, Spirit-filled saint be endowed with one or more of them. These gifts are not given for self-edification, but for the edification of the whole body of Christ.

The one exception to this rule is the gift of unknown tongues. According to the Apostle Paul, the main purpose for this gift is to build up the inner man for self-edification: “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church...He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God...But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor. 12: 2-4).

Tongues spoken out in a public meeting are not profitable to the church congregation unless they are interpreted in the language of the people present. But tongues with interpretation have the same benefits as prophecy: “For greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying” (1 Cor. 14:5). This edification of the church should in fact be the primary motivation of the saints in desiring to minister spiritual gifts: “Forasmuch as you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that you may excel to the edifying of the church...Let all things be done unto edifying” (1 Cor. 14:12, 26).

For this reason, prophecy is important in the life of the Church, because prophecy is the most edifying gift for a congregation. The other eight are focused “rifle” gifts, which normally bless one specific person or perhaps a few; prophecy is a “shotgun” gift that can bless hundreds of people at once.

This is one reason why Paul told the saints at Corinth to “desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may *prophecy*...

Wherefore, brethren, *cover to prophesy*" (1 Cor. 14:1, 39). He told the Thessalonians to "despise not prophesying" (1 Thess. 5:20). And to the church at Rome he wrote: "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith" (Rom. 12:6). Prophecy was evidently a common event in all the churches Paul established. Paul said he proclaimed the Word of God by four different means: "I shall speak to you by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying or by doctrine" (1 Cor. 14:6).

Peter taught the same truths about spiritual manifestations among the saints: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10). A New Testament church which is functioning on the same foundation which was laid by the first apostles and prophets will have manifestations of the Holy Spirit, especially the prophetic gift, ~~in all its activities.~~

We must keep in mind that the gift of prophecy is not the same as the office of prophet. Rather, it is an extension of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, while the office of prophet is an extension of the ministry of Christ. The gift is a body ministry function, while the office is a headship function.

THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY AND PROPHECIC SONG

The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (Rev. 19:10). This is not a gift or office, but an anointing arising from Christ within the believer. It takes place on occasions of special anointing in a service, or when Christians exercise their faith to be a voice through which Christ can testify.

Those who are not prophets or do not have the gift of prophecy will normally not prophesy; but when the spirit of prophecy is present, they may do so. This often happens under one of three conditions:

A **mighty prophetic presence** of the Lord permeates the service, making it easier to prophesy than to keep silent.

People come among a **company of prophets** or under the mantle of an anointed prophet.

People are **challenged by a minister** to let God arise and testify through them by the spirit of prophecy.

At these times any saint can enter in and exercise faith to prophesy: "Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith" (Rom. 12:6). "For you may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted" (1 Cor. 14:31). Those who prophesy under these circumstances should not assume that they have a gift of prophecy or office of a prophet. But if they keep exercising their faith in this way, a confirmation by a prophet or prophetic presbytery may make known to what extent they are called to the prophetic realm.

In Numbers 11:24-30, the seventy elders of Israel all prophesied when God took of the prophetic spirit on Moses and placed it upon them. At that time two men began to prophesy apart from the others, and Joshua told Moses to stop them. But Moses replied with his famous declaration: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets [prophesiers], and the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" Again, in 1 Samuel 10:10, Saul met a company of prophets, and the spirit of prophecy came upon him so that he began to prophesy. These stories should encourage those who want to learn to prophesy that they should find a prophet or company of prophets to train them how to release their faith so they can move in the spirit of prophecy.

The **song of the Lord** (Col. 3:16) is the spirit of prophecy expressing the thoughts and desires of Christ in song. The Scripture says of Jesus that "in the midst of the church" He would "sing praises to God" (Heb. 2:12) and that God "shall joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17). Prophetic song is part of the nature of Christ. He is a singing Savior, and He wants to sing to His church by the spirit of prophecy. Any saint may participate in this, but the anointing is mightier when the song comes through a prophet, prophetic, or one with a gift of prophecy.

Understandably, a person with a melodious voice is best used in this fashion. I myself receive many good words from the Lord, and some of them are even in rhyme; but since I do not have a good singing voice for the Holy Spirit to use, I refrain from singing the prophetic song. For me to sing a prophecy that would bless the ears as well as the spirit, God would not only have to give a prophetic anointing; He would also have to work a miracle in my voice. So I sing prophetically to the Lord when I am alone with Him, but I prophesy unsung words when with other people.

Throughout the Bible we read again and again that we are to "sing unto the Lord a new song" (Ps. 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Is. 42:10). Even the book of Revelation reveals that when all the redeemed of the ages are gathered together, they will sing a new song (5:9, 14:3). Prophetic singing is a part of the restoration of the prophetic realm. Singing is an activity of God and of the eternal Church. I believe that "spiritual songs" are the same as prophetic songs, so we should continue "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19).

6

PERSONAL PROPHECIES CONCERNING MINISTRIES, GIFTS AND CALLINGS

Each member in the Body of Christ has a special membership ministry to fulfill. The Holy Spirit distributes gifts and talents to every child of God, and Jesus calls some to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, or teachers. Personal prophecy can play an important role in helping saints come to know their place and function in the Church.

How do Christians come to know their particular calling, gift or ministry anointing? Biblical examples reveal numerous ways: dreams, visions, supernatural manifestations, the voice of God, an angelic visitation, or the Holy Spirit's witness and illumination of a Scripture that becomes a rHEMA to the individual. With some, God simply placed a strong desire within to be a minister of the gospel. In the case of the twelve apostles, Jesus issued a call by personal invitation. After His resurrection, the Lord appeared to Paul in His resurrected human body in brilliant light and called the apostle personally. Then He sent to him a disciple with a prophetic anointing who could lay hands upon him and prophesy more details concerning his ministry as an apostle of the Church to the Gentiles. In the Old Testament, David came to know his kingship ministry by

personal prophecy from the prophet Samuel. In the New Testament, Timothy came to know his gifts and calling by the laying on of hands and prophecy by Paul and the prophetic presbytery.

Evidently, God has never limited Himself to one method of calling. If you are a minister, think back to how you were initially called, how the call was confirmed, and how God worked it out for you to be in your present ministry. Probably no two calls are exactly alike. If you are not an ordained minister, how were you called to your ministry as a member of the Body of Christ? If you do not yet know your membership ministry, you need to discover it, just as much as a minister needs to know which of the fivefold ascension gifts he has received.

Thank God for the restoration of the prophet and personal prophecy. Ministries can now be made known to those who do not know their ministry, and confirmed to those who do. Since every member must come to full membership ministry before the Church can reach maturity and be properly prepared for the coming of the Lord, we can understand why Christ is restoring His prophet ministry to the Church as He ordained it should be.

MY OWN CALLING TO MINISTRY

My call to the ministry did not involve a vision, dream, angelic visitation, or voice from heaven. Though most people think that in order to be a prophet you must have some unusual supernatural experience, I received nothing of that nature. All I received was a growing desire after I was saved to become a minister.

I prayed by the hour and fasted up to seven days at a time for some supernatural manifestation and heavenly confirmation of this desire for ministry. I sought such a confirmation because I had no way of knowing whether it was my own ambition or Jesus calling and the Holy Spirit prompting. God's providential happenings eventually brought me into ministry, but it was two years after I became a pastor before I received any confirmation

outside of my own desire and conviction that I was called into fulltime, fivefold ministry.

The prophecies that came over me in 1953 by the ministerial presbytery described the activities, gifts, and ministry of someone that would be a minister, but not once did they mention any fivefold ministerial office nor use the word preacher or minister. So during the first two years of my pastoral ministry I questioned whether or not I was really called. But great assurance and encouragement came when in 1956 a prophet called me out of the audience and gave a half-page prophecy with the closing statement: "Lo, I have called thee as a prophet of these last days. Though it seemeth slow to be, yet I shall perfect that which concerneth thee." Finally, I had a clear confirmation that I was called, and specifically to the office of the prophet.

I have concluded since then that one reason God did not give me the visions, dreams and supernatural visitations I begged, pleaded, fasted and prayed for by the hour was that He was preparing me for the time when I would become one of His instruments to pioneer and propagate the restoration ministry of prophets and personal prophecy. He wanted me to have an appreciation for this ministry. If I had been able to find out everything about my ministry on my own without other ministers and saints being used to prophesy new ministries and callings, I would not have been willing in later years to stand for hours and prophesy over hundreds of others. I probably would have thought instead, "I prayed and sought God and found out *my* calling by myself. God told *me*, and if others want to know, they will just have to pay the price I did so God will speak to them as He did to me."

Through God's calling, preparation and anointing, He has enabled me to prophesy to over 15,000 people. During these thirty-five years of prophetic ministry I have prophesied to hundreds of ministers and brought revelation and confirmation to their ascension gift calling. God has often led me to call out

men in the audience who were not in the ministry, and reveal to them that they have a call to a special ministry. To some the thought of being a minister had never crossed their mind—it was a brand new revelation to them.

One such testimony concerns a prophecy on the very same night God first opened the endless river of prophetic flow through me. I prophesied over a businessman who was president of the local Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. His children were grown and he was well established in business with no thought of becoming a minister or missionary. This is his report:

My wife and I were at a meeting in Sacramento, California, in January, 1973. I was sitting on the platform and my wife was sitting in the audience. Dr. Hamon was prophesying to different individuals under a strong anointing. He pointed to my wife in the audience and then to me on the platform, and asked if we belonged to each other. We said yes, and he called us to him and gave us a prophecy.

The prophecy included statements declaring that God had called us to the ministry and that within one year we would be in another country preaching the gospel. I did not relate to that, nor did I believe it could be God. But eleven months later God called us to be missionaries in Mexico. We have been there eight years.

Another testimony comes from a man who has been a youth pastor for several years. This second report also shows that prophets will often speak things concerning ministry which had never before been considered by the person receiving the prophecy:

Dr. Hamon, you prophesied to me that I would raise up the children's church and the youth ministry, for God had anointed me for that ministry. You prophesied that they are the Church of today and the leadership of tomorrow, and I was to minister to this part of His Church and prepare His leadership.

When I walked outside the church, I was in shock. I had not been around prophets much, and because I had never thought of that ministry or had a desire to minister to children and youth, I began to think you had missed it. The immediate ministry you prophesied to me was completely opposite to what I thought God wanted me to do in the ministry. I even thought that maybe my pastor had paid you off to prophesy that word over me!

I had never worked with children before. I had my own ideas of what I could do and should do in the ministry, and it did not include children's ministry. But that prophecy completely changed my direction, my thinking, and my life! Because of my previous mindset concerning my ministry, I did not immediately relate to what you said. Yet I acted in faith upon 2 Chronicles 20:20 and believed His prophets so I would prosper. My pastor was in full agreement with the word, so he appointed us to the youth ministry. God has prospered the ministries to children and youth mightily.

This brother and his wife have done an outstanding job with the children's church and youth ministry. During the last four years they have produced one of the most successful youth ministries in any church. They love it now, and find great fulfillment in their ministry as youth pastors.

Activating Ministry by Personal Prophecy. Personal prophecy which is truly directed by the Holy Spirit is God speaking. When God speaks something, it is decreed in heaven. It is impregnated into the spirit of the person receiving the word of the Lord, and God's word carries with it the creative, life-giving power of self-fulfillment.

The reception of the divine, prophetic word is like conception in the womb of a woman or the planting of hybrid corn seed within the ground. The baby will grow and be born if the woman does nothing to abort the process. The seed will germinate and grow to a full stalk of corn with one or two large ears if the farmer waters, cultivates, weeds, and sprays against disease and worms.

Personal prophecy from the prophets and prophetic presbytery is one of God's ordained methods for planting the seed of ministry and gifts within individuals. The anointing that flows with the prophetic Word is like the yeast that makes bread rise or the water that makes seeds in dry ground sprout. Ministry can be activated by personal prophecy and the prophetic anointing, but it takes discipline, diligence and continual development to bring that ministry to consistency and maturity with mightier manifestations. Of the fivefold ascension gift ministers, the prophets have the strongest anointing and ministry for impartation and activation of gifts and ministries.

We must keep in mind that this ministry will not work through self-appointed prophets trying to speak as prophets. It will not work through someone speaking presumptuous, prophetic faith statements to fulfill their own ideas and desires. The thoughts spoken must have originated in the mind and will of God to be creatively productive.

There are always those who learn of a truth and then try to produce it through faith formulas, theological teaching, and doctrinal disciplines. But this is a work of the Spirit through a God-ordained prophet ministry. Any substitute is a counterfeit. It will be nonproductive and more of a hindrance than a help to the person giving and the individual receiving the non-anointed word.

When personal prophecy is flowing in divine order, however, it will impregnate and activate ministry within church members and ministers. Here are two examples from among many of those who have had this principle proven in their lives.

A pastor from North Carolina attended one of our CI Holy Spirit/Prophet Seminars in 1985. He sat under the teaching on how to activate the gifts of the Holy Spirit within our life, and was ministered to both by me and the prophetic presbytery which is formed from CI's staff and the company of prophets present. (Normally, there are three prophets per prophetic team, and one or two standing with the team for training and activation.) This pastor received several prophecies concerning

many areas of his life. The Lord had me prophesy specific gifts and ministries that were going to be manifested in his life, including the word of knowledge and prophetic anointing for calling people out and ministering to them personal prophecy and divine healing.

We were talking afterwards and he explained to me that he appreciated the words and the enthusiasm of those who ministered, but he just did not minister in those areas. He said that he had traveled with one of the outstanding healing ministers who manifests the gifts of the Spirit, but it just never worked in him. He did not doubt that God could some day use him that way, but it did not relate to him now.

Nevertheless, that pastor called us back the following week with this glowing report. When he arrived back home and began to minister on Sunday morning, the Holy Spirit began to stir him and his faith was activated—and he began to do exactly as the personal prophecy said he would do. By 1:30 that afternoon he was still calling people out by a word of knowledge and prophesying to them and ministering healing to those needs that God made known supernaturally. The prophetic word had impregnated and activated the gifts and anointing for that ministry.

In addition, God used a little situation to make sure the pastor exercised his faith and allowed God to do this for him. He had brought one of his new converts to the seminar with him. On the way home the young Christian said to him, "Isn't it exciting, Pastor, what God is going to do through you Sunday when we get back home? You remember what God said through the prophets you were going to do when you got back home?" He either had to discredit prophets and prophecy to his young member, or else believe and expect God to do what was prophesied He would do. So he believed God and was established in his faith for fulfillment; he believed God's prophets and prospered in his ministry.

This testimony is typical of numerous ones from those who

have been ministered to by prophets and prophetic presbyteries with similar results. I remind our seminar participants quite often that we do not lay empty hands on empty vessels for empty results, but anointed hands on anointed heads for anointed results. We expect gifts to be imparted and activated within those present at the CI seminars, just as Billy Graham expects the gift of eternal life to be imparted and activated within those who attend his campaigns. The same gospel truth he preaches that brings faith and conviction for receiving the gift of eternal life is the word of faith we preach that brings the anointing and faith to activate the gifts and callings of God within God's people.

Yet another testimony of the prophetic power to activate ministry comes from the leader of a singing group who ministered with me at a meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in October 1979. I prophesied to all of his group at this meeting. Part of the prophecy to this young man was that God was giving him the ability to write songs, and these songs would be sung around the world.

He testifies that just a few months after that prophecy, the song "I Am" was birthed within him. That was just the first of many songs he has written since that time. The anointed prophetic word by the prophet was a seed that was planted, and the prophetic anointing awakened that greater ability within him.

That musician kept watering the seed by prayer, by meditation, and by faithfully moving in his ministry until the seed germinated, sprouted, and grew from an anointing in his spirit into a revelation in his mind which brought understanding for the words and music for the song. He has so faithfully cultivated that plant that now he has harvested hundreds of new songs and choruses that are blessing the body of Christ around the world. By responding properly to his personal prophecy, he has caused every word to come to pass.

A Common Practice in the Early Church. Impartation and activation of ministry was a common practice in the early Church. We can see this in Paul's words to Timothy: "Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the presbytery." Paul was reminding Timothy that his divine gift was imparted to him by prophecy (1 Tim. 4:14). He reminded him again in his second letter to "stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (2 Tim. 1:6). Evidently the Apostle believed in and practiced the ministry of laying on of hands and prophecy for the impartation and activation of divine gifts and ministries within God's people. This is confirmed by Paul's statement to the Roman Christians that he longed to be with them, "that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Rom. 1:11).

These scriptures are sufficient to show us that this practice was a normal, established ministry in the Church. There are in fact as many scriptures on this subject as on other basic Christian practices, such as communion, water baptism, tithing offerings, church choir and orchestra, or the order for a church service. We have clear references in the Epistles and example in Acts concerning laying on of hands and prophecy for impartation, activation, healing, Holy Spirit direction, revelation general instruction and encouragement. In addition, we must also remember that "laying on of hands" is one of the six major doctrines of Christ listed in Hebrews 6:1-2.

The churches and individual Christians who do not practice this ministry or have it made available to them are missing a vital work of the Holy Spirit. Scripture tells us that the Spirit is to bring illumination, show us things to come, reveal ministry, and activate gifts. And the prophet and personal prophecy are instruments and avenues by which the Holy Spirit does this part of His work.

PUTTING PERSONAL PROPHECY IN PERSPECTIVE

Christian ministers and church members are faced with making decisions all of their lives. Dedicated Christians want to make their decisions in the will of God. They want every action and attitude in perfect harmony with heaven.

The Bible gives clear instructions for the general directions and standards for our lives. But how do we make decisions about particular matters for which the Bible cannot give us specific guidance? Take for example the single Christian man who likes two different single Christian women. Both meet all the biblical requirements for a wife, but he cannot marry both of them. He wants God's specific word and will on the matter. So how does he determine the right choice?

Personal prophecy can play an important role in helping believers make decisions of this sort. You may ask, "But is it proper—is it scriptural—for an individual Christian to go to a prophet and expect to receive a specific prophetic word of direction, instruction, or confirmation?" The answer is yes. The Bible provides numerous examples of people, especially those in leadership, going to a prophet and asking for a "thus saith the Lord" about a particular situation.

Specifically, God's people in the Old Testament often sought the high priest for an answer about God's specific will through the Urim and Thummim. These were regularly used by the ancient priest to give a yes or no answer from God to the inquirer. I believe that the New Testament prophet has been given the equivalent of the Urim and Thummim of the Old Testament.

God approves of this practice as long as we do not allow personal prophecy to become a substitute for our seeking God for ourselves through prayer, fasting, and searching the Scriptures. The prophet and personal prophecy are not to take the place of the inner voice of the Holy Spirit within New Testament saints. Instead, they are an extension of the Holy Spirit's ministry of communicating the mind of Christ to individual members of the body of Christ.

I believe it is just as legitimate scripturally for ministers and saints to seek insight, confirmation, and direction from a prophet about the specifics of God's will as it is to seek directive counseling from a pastor. The pastor will normally use biblical principles and scriptures to direct the person. He will sometimes insist emphatically, "I do not believe this is the will of God for you" by applying the Logos to a specific situation like marriage, business, ministry, or a geographic move.

The prophet, however, will pull from the Logos within him and give a rhema word to the individual that will answer his questions. A mature prophet who is not personally involved in the situation can even give the mind of Christ on the matter without allowing his personal convictions or theology to influence his answer. Often, in fact, a person asks for a word without even revealing what the matter is. Yet the prophet's anointing (which would be called a word of knowledge or wisdom in the saint) allows him to zero in on the problem with specific insight into the counsel and purpose of God in the matter.

Some years ago, as my reputation as a prophet began to spread, ministers and saints began to call me for a word of the

Lord on specific situations. People would also ask questions when I was ministering in personal prophecy at a local church. At first I was afraid to respond, lacking confidence that I had the right to expect God to give me an answer for them.

So I made a thorough search of the Scripture and discovered that it was in fact the prophet's prerogative to ask God for such information. But I also found that God would not give me a specific answer to just any and every request. The law of Moses gave specific instructions about most human relations, and general principles for doing what is right in the sight of God. The law was to be consulted first.

Prophecy is not a play toy or a way to satisfy curiosity. I have found that God will not answer questions that can be resolved by diligently seeking the Scripture. Nor will the Christ within the prophet respond positively when insincere requests are made, or foolish questions are asked.

People often came to Jesus with specific questions. When the query was from a Pharisee, Sadducee, or skeptical lawyer, the motives were usually not pure. So Jesus would answer with another question, a parable, or a brief statement without explanation that sounded like double-talk. On the other hand, those who faithfully followed Him and asked appropriate questions received a clear and compassionate answer.

Sometimes people have asked me inappropriate questions whose answers, even if they could be received from heaven, would be better off unspoken. Some have said, for example, "My son died two years ago in a car accident; is he in heaven or hell?" "My house burned six years ago; was it an accident or arsonist?" Young teens have often asked me to describe the person they would marry.

If the answers to these questions were unpleasant, the prophet would not be wise to reveal them even if he knew them. Would the mother really want to know that her son went straight to hell and was suffering eternal torment? Would the teen really like to know that she will grow old without ever

being married? No—Jesus wants us to live by faith, with hope and expectancy for His very best and highest in our lives.

We were not designed with the capability to know much about our future; it short-circuits our system's ability to live victoriously and carefree in the present. Jesus taught that each day has enough of its own problems and challenges, and so we should take no thought for tomorrow. Normally God reveals prophetically only those things about the future which we need to know in order to make proper preparation.

Some things, for example, would be edifying to know, or could provide us with a needed release. Recently at one of our Prophets' Seminars a woman asked a question at the end of her session with the prophetic presbytery: "My husband," she said, "has been an MIA for seventeen years. Could you tell me whether he is alive or dead? I have come to the place that I must know. I have sought the Lord for years, fasting, praying, but I cannot get a clear answer."

The Christ compassion and prophet anointing within me responded, "His spirit is no longer in his mortal body." This dear Christian sister was immediately released in her spirit; her anguish and confusion dissipated and she entered into the peace of God. I do not know why the Lord wanted her answered in that manner. And I am glad she did not ask whether he went to heaven or hell, because I could not tell by the words or impressions in my spirit. If she had asked, I would have had to say simply, "The Lord is not showing that to me." But the information she did receive was of great benefit to her.

The ministry of the prophet that was in Christ, and that enabled Him to give specific answers to questions which could not be answered by the Scriptures alone, has been invested in the prophets of the Church. Some may ask, "But where are your New Testament examples to verify that claim? Where are the incidents where people came to the prophet and received specific answers to questions?" I would answer that there are as many examples in the New Testament of prophets giving

specific prophetic directions to individuals about personal matters as there are of pastors giving counsel to individuals about the same matters.

No texts in the New Testament state or even suggest that a church prophet does not have all the ministry rights of the prophets of old as well as the Christ-prophet-anointing gift and grace. If the New Covenant does not do away with certain practices or ministries available in the Old, then they are still available in the Church Age. All the Law and Prophets were fulfilled in Jesus. When He ascended into Heaven, He gave the prophets back to the Church—and all that Jesus gave in the New Covenant is better than that in the Old Covenant. Jesus gave prophets to the Church, and they have all the rights and privileges of the Old Covenant, and more.

Yes, then, it is scriptural for a person to go to a prophet, having faith that God will supernaturally meet his need. You can ask questions and expect an answer. But your motives, your attitude, and your question must be proper to receive positive results.

For that reason, you should not go to a prophet until you are sure the Lord is first in your life. You should seek Him, pray and search the Scriptures, and listen for a rhema from the Lord until you believe you have an answer. Then, when you go before the prophet, you will be spiritually prepared to respond properly.

Instead of hearing totally new revelation from the prophet, you will then be more likely to hear mostly confirmation of what has already been birthed in your spirit. Such confirmation will give you greater confidence in your ability to hear from God yourself, and will cause you to receive the word in faith, thereby activating the power for the fulfillment of that word.

When you ask the prophet for an answer, the Lord will cause him to respond in one of several ways. If it is a simple yes-or-no question, God will inspire him to give a straight yes or no, or a yes with certain stipulations, or a "God does not want you to know the answer right now, so wait!" If you are seeking insight

into ministry through submitting to a prophetic presbytery or going before the prophet, you will probably receive enough prophecy to fill several pages about you and your ministry potential. Later chapters in this book will help you learn what to do with the prophecy once you have received it.

8

PERSONAL PROPHECIES CONCERNING ROMANCE AND MARRIAGE

God built within the male and female the desire and potential for romance, love, and marriage. God's natural design is the mutual attraction of man and woman to each other. But Christians need more than a physical attraction and soulful compatibility. There must also be unity of spiritual call and ministry for full compatibility. The highest consideration for the dedicated Christian should be, "Is it the will of God?"

Romantic love and mutual desire between a Christian boy and girl is not conclusive evidence that it is the will of God for them to marry. The decision for marriage needs the "three W's" of the Word, Will, and Way of God to be fully manifested before marriage is consummated (See Chapter 9). The Word of God definitely says that marriage is ordained of God, so it is not difficult to have that light turn green.

The second green light of the Will, however, is more difficult to determine. Of the multitude of lovely young Christian ladies, a Christian man must settle with one and be faithful to her. But which one? If mutual attraction and romantic love are not guaranteed proof of the will of God, then how shall he determine which prospect is the perfect will of God? Numerous

books have been written on this subject and are available through Christian bookstores. Yet most of these books do not tell how personal prophecy can help determine the will of God in romance and marriage.

We said earlier that in the broad sense, personal prophecy is any method God uses to reveal His specific will to an individual, whether by divinely directed desire, illumination, revelation, vision, or dream. In this discussion of romance and marriage, “rhema” will be our general term to refer to all of these means of God communicating His specific will to an individual. The term “prophecy” or “personal prophecy” will refer more specifically to a message conveyed as the will of God through the channel of another person. In this area especially, that distinction is important.

In my personal experience in counseling hundreds of young people in Bible college, as well as prophesying over thousands of singles in churches throughout the world, I have found that romance, love, and marriage are the most dangerous areas for receiving personal prophecies from others. This is evidently a touchy subject with the Lord. Rarely will the Holy Spirit use personal prophecy to activate romance and bring direction as to who should marry whom. But each Christian considering marriage needs a personal rhema from the Lord to bring assurance and peace concerning his or her mate.

Guidelines for Prophetic Romances and Marriages. One certain prophetic rule for romance and marriage is that the Holy Spirit works on *both* parties. I have counseled numerous young women and men who thought the Lord had told them they were to marry a certain person, but the other party had no mutual desire, leading, or inclination. Whenever one person thinks he or she has a rhema—or someone has given that person a prophecy—about marrying a certain other person, if the other person has sensed nothing along that line, then usually it is not a true word from the Lord. There are occasions when one person will know it is the will of God a few weeks or months before

the other. But when that is the case, the knowing party must wait until the way of the Lord works it out.

Every unmarried pastor who has a congregation with several single young ladies is plagued by two particular problems. One is that most of the older women are trying to play cupid, and the “spooky spirituals” are getting “revelations” about the woman he is to marry. Meanwhile, the younger single women begin receiving what I call “wishions”—that is, wishful thinking which they call divine visions.

I pastored as a single person for two years, and during that time several young ladies received “wishions” that I was to be their husband. Each was convinced that she had received a vision or direct word from the Lord. Yet the young lady who became my wife never once felt she had received anything from the Lord to marry me prior to my telling her I loved her and asking her to marry me. She felt God had spoken to her in her early years that she would marry a preacher, but she did not jump to any conclusions just because I was her pastor and single.

Once a couple has mutually agreed that they love each other and are seriously praying about marriage, then confirmation concerning the will of God should be sought from pastoral counseling and prophetic confirmation from a mature, proven prophet. This is one area where prophecy should be a confirmation and not a revelation. Of course, God will not always give a confirmation through the means we desire, but He will give us the peace, assurance, and faith we need to know that it is His will, and to make a successful marriage.

Let me illustrate this insight with a personal experience. After I had decided that Evelyn was the young lady I loved and wanted to marry, and had confirmed it by every way I could find, a date was set for the wedding. But I had been exposed to several ladies who had “wishions” about a helpmate, and to statements by preachers and Christian authors that a wife could make or break the minister, and make life heaven on earth or hell on earth. So I felt I had to know it was the perfect will of

God before I married. I knew I loved her, but I wanted to make sure she was the right one for me and for the ministry God had ordained for my life.

I had once been engaged to a preacher's daughter when I was in Bible college, and that had proved not to be the will of God. So that experience also contributed to a fearful obsession to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Evelyn was the perfect mate for me, and that she was ordained of God.

The wedding date was set for August 13, 1955. We were scheduled to attend a conference in Canada where they believed in prophecy and provided prophetic presbytery for those whom they felt led to call forth. So I started fasting before we went to the conference. The fast extended for nine days. I was so serious that I wrote the Lord a prayer letter, reminding Him that He promised that whatsoever I asked in His name, that would He do. I told Him I wanted the prophets to call me forth and prophesy, "Yea, My son, the one you have chosen is the one I have ordained for you...fear not...it's My perfect will."

The conference had two services a day for seven days in the middle of July. I prayed for hours at a time that week, and continued fasting the whole time, but not once did they call me forth for prophetic presbytery, nor did anyone give me a word privately. Since I was scheduled to be married within three weeks of returning to my pastorate in Washington, I had to know it was God's will.

Surely, I reasoned, God is as concerned as I am — so why doesn't He speak to me through the prophet or prophetic presbytery? I had pressed God for a vision, dream, angelic visitation, or some means of supernatural confirmation and had received none. Personal prophecy was now my last chance for a supernatural confirmation before my marriage date, but those prophesying did not even look my way.

As it turned out, God had His own way to answer my prayer. The main speaker at the conference had a dynamic ministry in the Word. He preached such simplicity of faith and trust in God

during that conference that by the end, faith, assurance and peace had been birthed in my heart. God did not give supernatural confirmation to my marriage by any of the ways I had suggested and strongly requested, but He did do it by a rhema from the preaching of the Logos of God.

My wife and I have been married now for thirty-two years, and we have had the most compatible and fulfilling marriage of any couple we have known or have counseled. We must trust God to reveal His will and bring confirmation to major decisions such as marriage, but we must not try to force God to do it one particular way. Our attitude should be one of faith in God as a person with a loving, trustworthy nature, and the power to fulfill our prayers and bring revelation and confirmation through many ways—including personal prophecy.

PROPHETIC MARRIAGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY PERSONAL PROPHECY AND RHEMA

Some marriages I have seen God put together are not the average "boy meets girl—falls in love—long engagement—wedding" type. In all of our years of ministry, I personally know of less than a dozen marriages that have been activated and brought together by the supernatural rather than the natural methods of romance and marriage. Our two sons, for example, had a normal Christian romance and marriage. But God did a different thing with our daughter.

Our daughter Sherilyn and her husband, Pastor Glenn Miller, met for the first time when we arrived at his church to conduct a four-day prophetic meeting. The following night, they both received rhemas that they were to break off the marriage engagements they had and marry each other instead. When personal prophecy confirmed the rhemas, they announced their new engagement and were married six weeks later. Glenn and Sherilyn had no chance for romance, nor much time even to get acquainted before the wedding. They were not even sure they liked each other, let alone loved each other. But they knew with

such strong conviction God had spoken that they pressed on through with the wedding.

The first year was unbelievably trying. But at the end of twelve months, Sherilyn had the first spiritual dream in her life. God showed her that the devil had made an accusation against that type of prophetic marriage. He told God that it would never last. In her vivid panoramic dream, she saw and heard the Lord tell the devil that He would give him one year to try to destroy it. They went through all kinds of trials and pressures financially, physically, socially, and in every other way the devil could conceive. Then she saw the devil return at the end of the year and tell God he needed more time. But God told him the year was up.

Immediately after that, they began to develop a great romantic attraction and appreciation for each other. For one year their marriage had offered mutual compatibility in a physical fulfillment, and their spirits were sustained by a spiritual conviction from a rhema; but their souls had suffered terrifically. Now things are different. They have been married for over seven years now and have grown deeper in love with each other every year since the first year of trial. And they have a very effective pastoral and prophetic ministry together.

This method of marriage by the arrangement of the Father is not altogether unusual. The modern Western way of romance and marriage is not the way it was done in Bible days. Fathers made arrangements for the marriages, and many times the bride and bridegroom never even met until the wedding night. Typical of such a marriage was that of Isaac and Rebekkah, which was strictly arranged by Abraham (a type of God) and Eliezer (a type of the Holy Spirit).

God, our Heavenly Father, still makes special arrangements for some marriages without following the natural path of dating, romantic love, romance and marriage. But when God arranges such a marriage, it works better in the long run than those which result from just natural attraction and soulful

motivation. Our Heavenly Father knows what is best for His children, even in matching them for marriage.

Romance and Marriage With Prophetic Involvement. Another example of a prophetic marriage is that of a couple we have known for years. The man had been saved out of the drug culture, and God had called him to ministry. At the time this incident took place, he was associate pastor of a church in Orlando, Florida.

The woman was one of his church members. Her husband, a major in the Army, had been killed in action, so she was left a widow with four small children. The pastor had visited her several times on his visitation rounds.

After several days of fasting and prayer about his future, including marriage, the pastor received a rhema on a Saturday morning that he was to marry this widow. He asked the Lord when they were to get married, and the word came back that it should happen on the following Thursday.

Before this time, neither of them had ever entertained any thoughts of romance toward each other, let alone marriage. So when this young pastor called the woman to tell her what he thought the Lord had said to him, she told him he was crazy. She had no intention of marrying him, especially not in four days! The pastor said that the Lord told him she was supposed to go in her closet and pray. She rejected the word and hung up the phone, but then thought it would not hurt to go in her closet and pray. When she knelt in her closet, she looked up—and there was the wedding dress she had bought a few days before, just because it was so beautiful and on such a good sale. She had said, “If I ever get married again, this is the dress I want to be married in.”

The Lord spoke to her clearly and said: “I was the one who inspired you to buy that dress so you would have it for your wedding Thursday.” So they were married that Thursday, and have had a very successful marriage and ministry together. The

two older children have graduated from Oral Roberts University, and this couple is pastoring a successful church in California and conducting Prophets' Conferences throughout the United States.

One final example of prophetic marriage illustrates that when a prophetic word is truly from the Lord, it will come to pass regardless of seeming impossibilities. My wife's baby sister, Sharon, was three years old when she served as flower girl at our wedding. Fifteen years later, on August 25, 1970, we were praying for Sharon at the church we all attended in San Antonio, Texas. I prophesied to her that day, and one part of the prophecy said her wedding plans would be settled within one year. She was eighteen years old.

The following July my wife told me Sharon was counting on that prophecy coming to pass. The year would be up within six weeks. At the time, Sharon and her parents were going back to North Carolina to visit some friends. She hoped to get together with her boyfriend who was stationed at an army base in the same state. Because of the prophecy, we expected that they would become engaged while she was there.

When Sharon arrived back the first week of August, however, to our surprise she had broken up with her boyfriend altogether. But the following Sunday she was playing the piano at church. Six soldiers were there from Fort Sam Houston, and one of them felt the Lord spoke to him that the girl playing the piano was the wife God had ordained for him.

They dated a few times during the next two weeks, and on August 24, they were in my office for counsel about marriage. The next night they met with her parents and her wedding plans were settled, exactly one year from the date the prophecy was given that her wedding plans would be settled within one year. I teasingly tell my brother-in-law that God sent him along to marry Sharon to retain my reputation as a true prophet.

We should note again emphatically that these prophetically motivated marriages are the exception to the rule, and not the

standard for Christians. I know many saints who thought they had received a rHEMA from the Lord that they were to marry a certain person, but it proved to be their own wishful thinking and imagination. In other chapters of this book we offer many guidelines for determining whether a thought is a true rHEMA from the Lord. The main criteria in prophetic marriages, however, is that both parties must be dealt with by the Lord, and both must come to mutual agreement without one putting undue pressure on the other.

My advice to unmarried Christians is to refrain from asking for a prophetic romance and marriage—but if that is how God moves supernaturally, then do not be afraid of it. There must, however, be a rHEMA within both parties. One party cannot make it on the conviction and revelation of the other if there is no witness or birthing of the Holy Spirit within his or her own heart. A person should never feel compelled to enter into a relationship with another if he or she does not feel the same nor receive the same rHEMA after earnestly and sincerely seeking God about the matter.

We must remember that God's natural process for marriage is mutual attraction, romance, friendship, love, mutual witness of the Holy Spirit, pastoral counseling and parental consent, and then wisdom and providential timing for the date of marriage. There are a few exceptions to the natural process, and there are some supernatural prophetic marriages, but God is the one that determines which way He will bring a man and woman together whom He has ordained to be husband and wife.

9

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD, WILL AND WAY

Though personal prophecy can play an important role in helping Christians make decisions, it is by no means the only way the Holy Spirit uses to reveal God's will and way. In my thirty-three years of ministry, I have had to make thousands of major and minor decisions. The major decisions, like marriage and ministry, have been so critical to the direction of my life that I have wanted to know beyond any shadow of a doubt that they were in the perfect will of God.

In this decision-making process, personal prophecy has played a part; but it has not been dominant. Probably ninety percent of my decisions have been made without personal prophecy being the dominating or even motivating factor. But I have striven to make one hundred percent of all my decisions to be based upon God's word, will, and way. A discussion of these factors can clarify when, where, and to what extent personal prophecy is to function in our lives.

The most accurate method of making sure you do everything in harmony with Heaven is to follow the "Three W's" of decision making: Determine God's *Word* on a matter, His specific *Will* about it, and His *Way* to fulfill it. These are like

three traffic lights which must all be "green" before we can proceed on our way.

The normal procedure is to make sure you have a "go" on the number one traffic light of the Word. If it is red (no), don't go any further. If it is green, go on to the next light of God's Will. Stay put until it is green as well; a yellow (take caution; no definite yes or no yet) means wait. Finally, when the third light of God's Way is green, you can proceed at the proper speed. You now have the mind and timing of the Lord, so finalize the decision and take immediate action.

The third light is especially important. Most sincere Christians are diligent to act according to the Word of God, and they are willing to seek His Will on a matter. But they are not always faithful to wait until God's Way is made clear.

A closer look at each of these traffic lights will help us see how they allow us to determine the mind of Christ, walk by faith, be led by the Spirit, put personal prophecy in its place, and fulfill our personal rhema from the Lord.

THE WORD

The Bible is the highest authority and has the final say in all matters. It is the revelation of God in written form as Jesus was the revelation of God in human form. The Scripture contains the thoughts, desires, and purposes of God revealed and written for all to read and understand.

This book of heaven was inspired by the Holy Spirit and given to men so that they can fulfill the prayer petition, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." It contains the do's and don'ts of what is good and bad, right and wrong, for all mankind, and especially for Christians. Rightly understood, the Bible is consistent with itself from Genesis to Revelation.

For a person to receive a green light on the Word, he must have more than just one obscure verse for authorization. It must be part of the Logos and not just a rhema found in the Bible but intended for someone else. We cannot use the rhema to Isaiah to

go naked in public, or the rhema to Hosea to marry a harlot, in order to justify our doing the same thing today. The personal prophecies of biblical figures or of our contemporaries cannot be used to establish doctrine or become a pattern for all to follow. Thus we must go to the Bible, not with the desire to legitimize our desires, but rather to submit them to the Word of God and have them come in line with the Logos.

Before the green light of the Word can come on, the spirit of the Word and the letter of the Word must agree. God is Spirit, and the spirit of the Word is the nature, character, and principles of God. You may think you have found a verse or two that gives you a green light, but if it is contrary to the nature of God, and His general principles, then you are misinterpreting the verse and taking it out of context.

A minister once came to me and said he had received a "rhema" from the Lord that he was to leave his wife. She had become discouraged and resentful, and was refusing to travel with him in the ministry or be involved in pastoral work. She had become a weight of resistance and was causing him to "sin" against God by not fulfilling his preaching ministry. He was convinced that the Lord had spoken to him the scriptures "Lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset you," and "He that leaves...wife...for my sake and the gospel's" will be blessed (Heb. 12:1; Mk. 10:29).

I did not prophesy to him; instead I gave him prophetic pastoral counseling. I told him that it was not the Will and the Way of God for him to divorce his wife, though he seemed to have some scriptures that justified his desire. He argued that souls were dying and going to hell, and thousands of people were not being ministered to, because they were being denied his preaching and healing ministry. If he could just get rid of the weight of his wife, he said, he would be free to move in his ministry. He insisted that he was greatly burdened for Christ's bride, the Church, and he wanted to minister to her.

A year later I was back in his area and met him again, so I inquired about his marital status. He said he had prayed much about it and considered all the hours of counsel that had been given him. While he was praying one day, beseeching the Lord to release him from his wife so he could minister to the Church, the Lord spoke to him clearly and emphatically a true rHEMA which settled the issue for him. Christ Jesus told him, "If you cannot minister love, life, and restoration to your own bride, do you think I want to turn you loose on mine?" So he put his heart into loving and restoring his wife, and they are together in the ministry today.

Expose every thought, impression, and suggestion that comes to you from any source—regardless of how spiritual or religious it may sound—to the whole Bible. To avoid entering into deception and delusion, keep a love for the truth as it is, and not what you selfishly want to interpret it to be. Let the Word of God (Logos) dispel and destroy all self-delusion of the deceitful heart. Only the two-edged sword of the Word of God can divide soul and spirit and reveal whether the thought and impression comes from the soulish realm or the spiritual one.

Thoughts and desires should not be made prayer petitions until they receive a green light from the Word. If your thought or desire is unscriptural, improper, illegal, or immoral according to divine principles, then you are wasting your time asking God to let you do it. God and His Word are one: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one" (1 Jn. 5:7).

The Holy Spirit will never tell you to do something contrary to the nature of God or the Holy Scriptures. Heaven will not answer such petitions. Any contrary thought that seems to be an answer to your prayers and meditation would have to come from soulish imagination, selfish deception, or the devil. Peter declared that it is possible to take Scripture out of context and twist it to one's own deception and destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).

This is precisely what has been done by cultic groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons.

True, conscientious Christians cannot have faith to receive the answers to their prayers unless they are confident that what they are asking is the will of God for them: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hears us...we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 Jn. 5:14-15). If you know your petition is scripturally the will of God, then you will have confidence and faith to believe God for it.

For that reason, before you accept any thought as from the Lord, or embark upon any enterprise, make sure you have an absolute green light from the Word of God, the Bible. But even then, you do not yet have an open road for full speed ahead. You must look for two more traffic lights before you can have Heaven's full approval, authority, and anointing.

THE WILL OF GOD

Just as God has a general Will for all mankind, He also has a specific Will for individuals. He has general directives for the corporate body of Christ, and specific directives for the individual members of that Body. Just as all directions for the human body come from the head, all directives for the Body of Christ—both corporate and individual—come from Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church.

All true rHEMAS and leadings of the Spirit will be in harmony with God's overall purposes, and for the edification of the whole body of Christ. But just as the human head's directives to the eye are not the same as those for the ear or any other part, Christ's specific Will and instructions for each member and ministry in the Body are not all the same. They must be personalized by individual application.

For that reason, the Bible can only give general directions to the whole Body of Christ, a few qualifications and requirements

for certain ministries, and a general description of what to do. Without the working of the Holy Spirit and Christ's fivefold ministry—especially the prophet—the Bible cannot by itself provide specific directions and reveal the Will of God concerning all personal matters.

The Bible declares, for example, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). The Holy Spirit is today raising up a great army of Christian soldiers to fulfill this commission. Now suppose that a dedicated Christian wants to be a part of that fulfillment as a true soldier of the cross. In which "division" of the Lord's army does he enlist: the preaching division, the praying division, or the paying division who support it? Is he to go into full-time ministry? If so, does he preach in his homeland or in a foreign land? Or is he to be a Christian businessman who provides the means to finance the frontline preaching division? Or is it perhaps God's Will for him to be a part of the great intercessory prayer division? Every "soldier" is called to do some of all three of these activities, but we must major in one to be effective; and we need to know God's Will about our "major."

The Bible gives general criteria for making many decisions in business, travel, ministry, and use of our finances. But it does not provide many specifics. Scripture says that it is not good for a man to be alone, and that marriage is honorable; but it does not specify which saintly woman to marry. Mutual attraction and romantic feelings between a Christian man and woman are no guarantee that it is God's Will for them to marry. And just because a business endeavor is legal and scriptural does not mean that it is God's Will for an individual to be involved in it. God's specific Will never contradicts His general Will, but it may sometimes supersede His general Will.

Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Father, not my will but thine be done." David, the king after God's own heart, prayed, "Teach me to do thy will, O God." The Father had a specific Will for Jesus that others could not fulfill. He had a

specific role for David as for all the other godly patriarchs, kings, and prophets.

So how do we come to know the specific Will of God for our lives? We must take a look at the ways God made His Will known to people in the Bible, and then see how the Holy Spirit works with saints today to reveal His specific Will for them.

God's methods of personal, individual revelation in the Scripture were widely varied. He directed Joseph by dreams. He spoke to Moses with an audible voice out of the fire. He whispered to Elijah in a still, small voice. He sent the archangel Gabriel to Mary. He appeared personally to Paul in the glorified body of Jesus. He spoke to David through the prophecy of Samuel and Nathan. He sent word to Jehu through the prophet Elisha and others. He directed Timothy through the laying on of hands with prophecy by the presbytery. And He guided Jesus through divine revelation knowledge.

Given all these ways of discovering God's Will, we need some guidelines and safeguards for discerning it in our own lives. Once we have passed the traffic light of God's Word and are assured that what we are considering is in keeping with both the context and the spirit of the Word, we can expect the Holy Spirit by the following biblical methods to bring clarity, assurance, and direction.

GOD'S METHOD FOR REVEALING HIS PERFECT WILL

Divinely Directed Desire. The psalmist said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God" (Ps. 40:8). God's greatest delight is for His children to desire to do His Will—to take delight willingly in crucifying the flesh and fulfilling the desires of the Holy Spirit. He takes no pleasure in pressuring His children to do His Will.

God's Word assures us that if we delight ourselves in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our heart (Ps. 37:4). This scripture, I believe, has a twofold application. First, it means that God will cause us to desire what He wants us to have. Second, as we trust in Him, He will cause that prophetically inspired desire to come to pass. Consequently, desire can be a

supernatural indication of the will of God. But desire alone, without additional confirmations, is insufficient evidence for concluding that what we desire is the perfect Will of God.

RHEMA AND SCRIPTURE ILLUMINATION

A rhema is an inspired Word birthed within your own spirit, a whisper from the Holy Spirit like the still, small voice that spoke to Elijah in the cave. It is a divinely inspired impression upon your soul, a flash of thought or a creative idea from God. It is conceived in your spirit, but birthed into your natural understanding by divine illumination. A true rhema carries with it a deep inner assurance and witness of the Spirit.

God sometimes reveals His Will by a rhema from "out of the clear blue." But at other times we receive it by an illumination of a particular Scripture. As we read, God sends a quickening rhema that says, "This applies to you."

Jesus received direction for His ministry that way (Lk. 4:16-21). This type of divine directive may also be called "revelation knowledge" or "Scriptural illumination."

THE PROPHET AND PERSONAL PROPHECY

God still uses the prophet today to give specific, directive words to the saints about their personal lives. These directive prophecies are not usually given through someone moving in the gift of prophecy, but rather through the prophet. Though saints and other ministers may receive a Word of knowledge or wisdom on a matter, a "thus saith the Lord" with specific, directive words should usually come from the office of the prophet.

This is true because the word of a mature, proven prophet with a track record of being accurate can be taken seriously, evaluated, and acted upon immediately. We should always consider carefully any prophetic word given to us, whatever its source. But when a person without a proven ministry gives me a word, and I do not relate to it or have a clear witness to it, then I usually wait for more confirmation through several human

vessels before I act on it. The only words I reject completely are those which are unscriptural or are clearly not from God.

Many areas of major ministry in my life were first planted in my spirit or brought to light by personal prophecy. I believe that this ministry within the Church will increase and become more prominent as God's great company of prophets are manifested.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit can make known the specific Will of God through His nine gifts, especially the "revelation gifts" of the word of knowledge and the word of wisdom. Ministers and businessmen need desperately to know how to allow these gifts to make wise decisions in their churches and businesses. Parents need these gifts for making family decisions when natural knowledge is insufficient and the Bible is not specific.

A choice between right or wrong is not difficult for a dedicated Christian. But when the choice is between two right things, supernatural help is needed. The gifts of the Spirit are available for every Christian, to help us discover God's Will on matters and to follow through with wise decisions.

THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

To be led by the Holy Spirit does not mean that we are led only by supernatural manifestations of the gifts. The supernatural fruits of the Spirit are just as vital in determining the mind of Christ as the gifts. The fruits and gifts are like two sides of the same coin, and both sides must be in good shape for it to be "spendable."

Evangelicals tend to emphasize the fruits of the Spirit, and charismatics the gifts. But the Holy Spirit is not in competition with Himself. Both the fruits and the gifts are manifestations of the Spirit's activity in our lives.

Isaiah declared prophetically, "You shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace" (Is. 55:12). To make decisions according to the spiritual peace they bring is being led by the Spirit. To take action because of the joy of the Lord is to be motivated by the Holy Spirit. To move in faith—which is both a

gift and a fruit of the Spirit—is moving in the mind of Christ and walking with God, “For we walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

Of these, the peace of God is particularly important. Paul declared that the spiritual mind can be identified by the extent of its life and peace: “to be spiritually minded is *life and peace*” (Rom. 8:6). He also instructed us to let the peace of Christ rule—that is, govern and direct—our hearts (Col. 3:15), for God’s peace should override all confusion, doubt, and indecision: “The peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). If you want to know the specific Will of God, “Depart from evil, do good; seek *peace* and pursue it” (Ps. 34:14).

In determining the Will of God on a matter, then, look inside your soul and spirit to see how much peace and joy you have about the situation. How many of the nine fruits of the Spirit are evident in the matter? Do you have faith or doubt, love or fear, desire or dread, joy or anxiety, peace or pressure, meekness or self-determination, temperance or impatience? If you have the mind of Christ on the matter and are being led by the Spirit, you will find the right fruits within. If you do not have them, then the traffic light of God’s Will has not turned green. Do nothing, make no commitments or final decisions, until this light gives you the go-ahead.

THE WITNESS, CLEARANCE, OR RESTRAINT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Apostle Paul did not always know exactly what the Lord wanted him to do. So if he was unable to find out supernaturally which way to go for ministry, he would simply go the way he thought best. If the Holy Spirit did not want him to go to that place at that time, He would give Paula a check or restraint in his own spirit.

The incidents in Acts 15 and 16 show the Apostle operating this way when he intended to preach in Asia, but was rerouted by the Lord instead to Macedonia. These events prove that God

has a general Will as well as a specific Will. It was His general Will for the gospel to be preached to every creature, but He had specific plans for when, where, and how it should be preached.

To know and follow God’s Will for our lives, then, we must be very sensitive to the checks and restraints of the Holy Spirit. He will also “bear witness with our spirit” (Rom. 8:16) to help us know His mind. The prophet Agabus, for example, gave Paul a prophecy that he was going to face suffering and prison in Jerusalem. The brethren tried to talk him out of going, but he went on, because the revelation was nothing new to him. The Spirit had been witnessing to the same truth in almost every city on his journey (Acts 20:22; 21:1-14). Agabus’s prophecy was just another confirmation of what had been said in numerous personal prophecies given to him before.

If you want the green light of God’s Will to shine, then you must have clearance in your spirit. Never ignore promptings or restraints from the Holy Spirit; it will dull your spiritual senses. It will also change God’s ordained green light into a blinking yellow light inside that causes you to become either self-willed and set in your ways, or else bound up in a perpetual state of confusion and indecision.

WISE COUNSEL

One of the biblical names for Jesus is “Counselor” (Is. 9:6). It reveals His nature and character as One who reveals His will and way through counseling. His name is also “Everlasting Father” and “Good Shepherd,” because Pastoral and parental counseling—godly advice from those wiser and more mature than ourselves—is an important way of determining the Will of God.

Numerous Scriptures confirm the necessity of seeking counsel before making major decisions: “He that harkeneth unto counsel is wise.” “Where no counsel is, people fall; but in the multitude of counselors they are established.” “Plans go wrong with too few counselors; many counselors bring success.” “Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise

in thy latter end." "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." "Every purpose is established by counsel; and with good advice go to war." "Don't go to war without wise guidance; there is safety in many counselors" (Prov. 1:14; 12:15; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; 24:6). If it is wise to seek counsel in matters of war, how much more so in matters of God's Will, which pertains to eternal life and death endeavors?

Seeking counsel is critical, then, but we must seek it with an open heart rather than concluding ahead of time that we know the Will of God. When we approach a prophet, pastor, parent, or elder, we should not talk and act as if we already have our minds settled: "God told me to do this, but I was wondering what you think about it." If God really told you to do it, who will be willing to argue with God? That attitude makes it difficult for another person to give you proper counsel. God will not force His counsel on you anymore than He forces His salvation on you.

CONFIRMATION

One of the best known principles for determining the Will of God is the scriptural requirement that everything must be confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses before accepting it as fact. This principle about receiving confirmation was established in the law of Moses (Dt. 17:6; 19:15) and reestablished under grace in the Church by the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. 13:1).

The rule can be applied to a word of counsel, a word of prophecy, or a rhema word. Just as the general Will of God cannot be established by a single verse, neither can the specific Will of God be established by one prophecy, one rhema, one counselor, or one anything else. It is not offensive to the Lord for you to withhold judgment on a word until you receive confirmation from two or three other sources. In fact, He insists that in all serious matters there be at least two and preferably three witnesses before you accept a prophetic word.

UNITY

When more than one party is involved in a decision, agreement and unity among them is essential for God's Will to be revealed. When everyone is in the specific Will of God, there will be unity. For a husband and wife, for example, to be in full agreement and peace about a matter is indicative of God's Will. We must be in unity with God, ourselves, and others who are involved in the decision, and Psalm 133 tells us that where there is unity, there is life.

By now we have accumulated a number of indications of God's Will. Suppose we have taken a specific desire and what we believe to be a directive word from the Lord, and exposed it to the whole Word of God, both in Spirit and in context. The Word light has turned green. Then suppose we have received several personal prophecies and proper counsel, which have brought confirmations in the mouth of two or three witnesses. We have the fruit of the Holy Spirit with regard to the matter, and there are no checks or restraints from the Spirit, but rather a sense of peace and clearance. All pertinent parties are in unity; all things are in order.

At this point, we can move in the confidence that it is His general Will, based on the Word, and His specific Will based on the confirmed rhema. But these two green lights of Word and Will are not enough to act upon. The third light, the Way of God, must turn green as well before the work of God can be accomplished.

THE WAY OF THE LORD

The Word gives Heaven's authorization, and God's Will specifies that a course of action is for you. But you still must know the Way to fulfill God's desire. The Way of God includes His timing, methods, and necessary means to do it; the who, what, when, where, and how (but not always the why); the continued guidance and control of circumstances by God; and the patience to press on until His plan is accomplished.

To possess the way, we need above all *patience*: “Ye have need of patience, that after you have done the will of God you might receive the [prophetic] promise” (Heb. 6:12). The person with patience will eventually possess the promise.

Sadly enough, most Christians are not even aware of this third traffic light in their walk with God. So many endeavors fail because they were not attempted according to God’s way. “There is a way that seems right unto man, but they are the ways of death” (Pr. 14:12). God’s ways are not our ways, for they are as much higher than ours as the heavens are high above the earth (Is. 55:9).

Often God’s Word and Will are much easier to determine than His Way. The Word can be determined by examining a Book, the Will by personal inward principles and confirmations from others. But the Way is a time process that must be walked out day by day, because all the details of it are rarely ever revealed ahead of time.

Certainly, personal prophecies can play a part in revealing the Way, giving road signs at critical junctures to point the right direction and to say how long till the next turn. But God is apparently reluctant to give out too many details, and so the Way is often worked out in the same way we put together a jigsaw puzzle—one piece at a time. And the individual pieces of the process often fail to make sense in themselves, only gaining significance when the overall picture has finally come in sight.

GOD’S WAY FOR ABRAHAM AND MOSES

We can see this process illustrated in the lives of Abraham and Moses. First of all, the word of God to Abraham was to leave Ur of the Chaldees, become the father of a great race of people for the Lord, and possess Canaan as homeland and headquarters. This Word was spoken as God’s specific Will through divine revelation, and confirmed by several prophecies.

The Way for Abraham to fulfill God’s desire was to “look and walk the length and breadth of the land” (Gen. 13:17). His

personal responsibility was to keep looking and walking all the days of his life, and to believe that every place he put his foot within the designated borders would be given to him and his seed for an inheritance. (Note, however, that God’s Way for Joshua to possess the land four hundred years later was different).

The particular place God had chosen for possession was Canaan, but the place He designated for the nation to grow was Egypt. The appointed time for the fulfillment of His desire was not until four centuries later, when the land was fully conquered and possessed by Israel. For that reason, patience was critical for Abraham and his seed; they had to wait until the sins of the Amorites had reached their fullness, and his descendants had multiplied to become like the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore. God’s Word and Will came quickly, but it took hundreds of years for His Way to be completely unfolded. God prophetically speaks to nations in relation to centuries, to families in relation to generations and to individuals according to an entire lifetime.

Moses is a second good example of this process. The Word of the Lord came to him to deliver His three million chosen people out of Egyptian bondage, and to take them to the land promised to Abraham. God’s specific Will was made known by the audible voice of God and confirmed by signs and wonders.

God’s Way for the Israelites was to travel through the two-year wilderness route rather than the eleven-day route, which was the well-traveled road to Canaan. His provision came in the plagues on Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, and the miracles and manna in the desert. He guided them by the pillar of fire by night and the cloud by day.

The people had to endure patiently until Pharaoh gave the order to release them, and then again in the wilderness. Though the generation of liberated slaves were the specific people God wanted to possess Canaan, they eventually lost patience, sinned

and rebelled. So Joshua and the younger generation fulfilled the prophecy instead.

This meant an extension of their timetable into forty years of wandering. The people had to follow the cloud and fire until God was ready for them to take Canaan. He wanted sufficient time to put into place everything necessary to fulfill His purposes: a tabernacle to be His dwelling place; a code of laws to preserve them and maintain them in a right relationship with Him and with each other; and a political system to transform them from a disordered multitude into twelve organized tribes arranged in His order around the place of His presence. This training period also gave them enough exposure to enemies to gain a proper training for warfare, and to move at once by faith when the challenge came to enter the land, drive out the giants, and take possession.

NOT A FORMULA, BUT A FLOW OF FAITH

Joshua had to discover God's unique way for conquering each of the nations he encountered in Israel. Jericho, for example, had to be taken in a peculiar way; and when they simply assumed that they knew how to take the city of Ai, they lost the battle. David also won every battle differently, because he waited for the green light of God's Way before venturing into conflict. One time the green light was actually given by the rustling in the tops of the mulberry trees!

We, too, need special wisdom to do the specific Will of God. Ministry must be launched in the fullness of time; if the timing is not right, catastrophe can result. Our attitude must also be right. For example, it is God's Word and specific Will for us to forgive those who trespass against us. But the way some of us go about it negates its effectiveness: "I want you to forgive me for my honest mistake, and I forgive you for your dumb actions and immature attitude, and pray that you will never be that stupid again."

Our action must also be according to God's often unusual plan. Many times His Way is not practical to human reasoning;

it is not the way natural man would do it. Because God's Way is a walk of faith, not by sight, we cannot depend on natural knowledge. We must have divine revelation.

Some people are called to preach and prophesy. But they try to do it by imitating someone else rather than seeking God's specific Way for them. Some Christians receive personal prophecies about great financial prosperity, but they never fulfill it because they never found out God's Way to do it. Still others find God's Way, but after they start acting according to it, they gradually revert back to their old ways, losing God's anointing upon His Will for their lives.

Once the Word has given approval, and the Will has been revealed, the Way must be waited for until it is made known. We must pray the prayer of the "man after God's own heart," David: "Show me thy way, O Lord" (Ps. 27:11). God said that He showed His acts to Israel, but He made known His Ways to Moses; so we must be like Moses.

God has not only a time for every work under heaven, but also a right way for it to be accomplished. So the key to successful Christian endeavors is to find His Way to fulfill His Will with the authority of His Word. With all three traffic lights green, we can proceed at full speed to obey God.