God speaks through prophecy

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Broadcast Date: 1/18/21
Message Date: 8/12/20 ● 7:00 P.M.

Scripture References

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Summary

God can speak to us in a variety of ways; one of those ways is through prophecies. God uses prophecy to edify, encourage, and comfort us, as well as to strengthen and equip us for any mission we are to embark on. Another purpose they serve is to warn us and equip us for battle against our enemy, the devil. In order for them to come to pass, we must take seriously any prophetic promises we receive. Accepting a prophecy without wavering in doubt actually strengthens our faith, the way Abraham’s faith was strengthened when he was fully convinced of God’s promises. Paying attention to a prophecy gives us light in the midst of darkness. Maintaining a personal relationship with Christ, and listening for the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts and confirm the prophetic words we hear, will clearly reveal God’s will for us.

A. True prophesies from God are always uplifting and encouraging, never discouraging.
1. Someone giving a genuine prophecy from God should speak words that edify, exhort, and comfort. If these elements are not present, we must be careful about receiving the message.
   a. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3).
   b. But one who prophesies strengthens others, encourages them, and comforts them (1 Corinthians 14:3, NLT).
2. Prophecies equip us for a successful spiritual fight. When God speaks to us, it is to give us tools to use against the enemy of our souls.
   a. This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare (1 Timothy 1:18).
   b. Timothy, my son, here are my instructions for you, based on the prophetic words spoken about you earlier. May they help you fight well in the Lord’s battles (1 Timothy 1:18, NLT).
3. When we receive a prophetic promise from God, and our spirits know it is real and true, we must receive it by faith and hang on to it without wavering. Moses did this; we must also.
   a. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness (Romans 4:20-22).
b. Abraham never wavered in believing God’s promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God. He was fully convinced that God is able to do whatever he promises. And because of Abraham’s faith, God counted him as righteous (Romans 4:20-22, NLT).

B. A prophecy can either tell us “go” or “stop”. Not everyone who prophesies is truthful.
1. The message proclaimed by the prophets is a sure Word. The New Testament was a sure Word that was prophesied before it came to pass. Ignoring God’s prophecies is like ignoring a lamp in a dark place; we should never doubt or question them.
   a. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts (2 Peter 1:19).
   b. Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts (2 Peter 1:19, NLT).
2. Prophecies have more than one element; there is also a correct timing involved.
   a. Sometimes God gives us a Word months, or even years, before it happens. This is so that we can focus in on it and prepare ourselves for it.
   b. Not only does God give us assignments, He also includes specific details like when, how, and with whom. These details are just as important as the task itself. He makes sure we hear all the details; all we need to do is to be sensitive to what He is saying.
   c. The “stop” commands from God are just as important as the “go” commands. Most people are listening for directions on where to go; however, sometimes God will have us stop doing something, so that the timing of the prophetic Word will work properly.
3. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matthew 7:21).
   a. Some people are always trying to give others a Word from God even when they have not heard a prophetic Word at all. It is dangerous to depend on others to hear God’s will for us; we learn His will when we are in a relationship with Him.

C. We must know God’s voice so that we can tell if a prophecy we hear is really from Him.
1. I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied (Jeremiah 23:21).
   a. As God’s sheep, we must be able to recognize His voice; His sheep know His voice (John 10:4, 27).
2. I have not sent these prophets, yet they run around claiming to speak for me. I have given them no message, yet they go on prophesying (Jeremiah 23:21, NLT).
   a. We must beware of false prophets that God did not send. It is imperative that we have enough discernment to know God’s voice and differentiate it from someone else’s voice.
   b. God does not prophesy discouragement, or anything that takes away our comfort or makes us feel weak.
   c. We will never know God’s voice without a personal relationship with Him.
   d. God will never give us a prophecy without the Holy Spirit first dropping it into our spirits. The Word we receive will simply be a confirmation of what the Spirit told us earlier.
3. There are four questions to ask ourselves to determine if we are really hearing from God:
   a. Does it require faith?
   b. Does it require courage?
   c. Does it line up with the written Word?
   d. Is there peace that accompanies the message?

Category: faith
Keywords: speaks, prophecy, speak, prophecies, encourage, strengthen, faith, prophetic