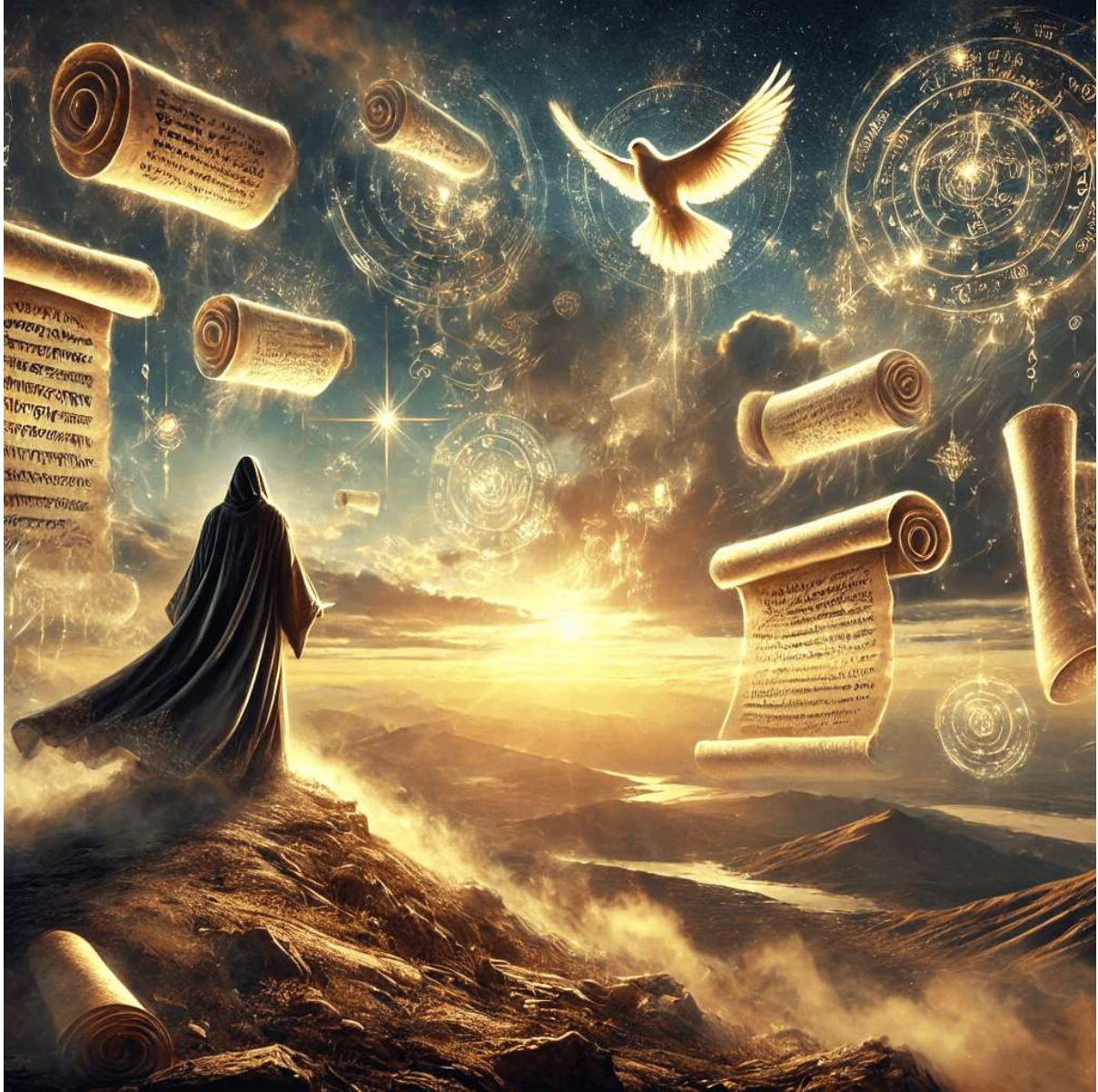


Prophetic gifting and ministry

Study notes



Written by Damion Gans

Scripture readings

1 Peter 4:11 NASB2020 (additional emphasis added)

Whoever speaks is to do so as one who is speaking actual words of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 14:1-12 NASB2020

Pursue love, yet earnestly desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. For the one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people, but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries. But the one who prophesies speaks to people *for* edification, exhortation, and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but the one who prophesies edifies the church. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but rather that you would prophesy; and greater is the one who prophesies than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edification. But now, brothers *and sisters*, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophecy, or of teaching? Yet *even* lifeless *instruments*, whether flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? For if the trumpet produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So you too, unless you produce intelligible speech by the tongue, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will *just* be talking to the air. There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and none is incapable of meaning. So if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be unintelligible to the one who speaks, and the one who speaks will be unintelligible to me. So you too, since you are eager to possess spiritual *gifts*, strive to excel for the edification of the church.

Working definitions

First some working definitions

- **A prophecy** (*noun*) is what God reveals to us, by inspiring us, breathing into us, something of Himself that He communicates with us.
- **To inspire** (*verb*) is when something or someone divine gives a man a revelation, insight or the means necessary for the person to understand or act upon something specific. This could be a direct spiritual inspiration from the divine entity to the man, or through the means of something external, such as a situation, physical occurrence or circumstance.
- Something is **prophetic** (*adjective*) if God uses that thing to inspire. In those moments, God breathes Himself into the situation to communicate with us.
- **To prophecy** (*verb*) is to speak a prophecy out, to utter it, to communicate it in some way with others.

The purpose of prophecy

To prophecy is to speak God's words over people. Prophecy is mainly to build up one another, the church, to encourage and to give one another direction, though a prophecy can also be just for the person who has received it. This is because God wants to build up people, encourage people and give direction to people. This is the reason why God expects us to prophecy in an orderly fashion, so that it does what it was meant for.

Prayer and prophecy

Prophecy is not necessarily the same as prayer, though in moments the same can occur. Prayer is direct bi-directional communication with God, us telling Him our desires, feelings and telling Him what keeps us busy, and God responds to us with what He wants to give us back. During prayer, God can breathe into us (inspire) a prophecy, reveal something to us, give us something we didn't know or see just yet.

Discernment of prophecy

Even though prophecies are from God, when we communicate them, it is easy to get confused, because we ourselves can have a preconceived idea about the subject of the prophecy.

It is important to keep in mind that prophecy is from God and thus it is always aligned with who He is and what He wants. Sometimes we have an idea about that, sometimes God wants to say or do something that we didn't know or think of before. That is why it is so important to stay humble and to stay aware of the temptation to project our own

thoughts and ideas into the thing that is being prophesied. God will often give new revelations that challenge our current understandings and outlook on life and our circumstances (otherwise there would be no need for prophecy).

Prophecy is from God and communicates the things of God, divination does not. Not everything that claims something with authority has the authority of God. For example, God can use numbers to communicate with us, but so does the devil. That's why it is very important to take every perceived divine message back to God in prayer, because He can clarify and add unto it. It is also a good test to make sure if something is from God.