

## I. REVIEW

A. When God first started speaking about the Daniel Training Network earlier this year, He highlighted several aspects of Daniel's life and ministry that He wanted to find expression through the Daniel Training Network.

B. Daniel *prayed*. Prayer and intercession was the foundation of Daniel's life.

*Daniel 6:10b (NIV)*

***Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed...***

C. Daniel *proclaimed*. Daniel also had clear understanding of the biblical gospel. He proclaimed the Messiah's coming earthly kingdom, and his hope was in the bodily resurrection of the saints that will occur at the end of the age.

*Daniel 2:44 (NIV)*

***"In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed..."***

D. Daniel *prophesied*. Daniel was also sensitive to the voice of the Lord. He had skill in hearing the Spirit clearly. Through prophetic means, the Holy Spirit gave him strategic insight into God's purposes at the end of the age.

*Daniel 1:17b (NIV)*

***And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.***

E. Daniel *prepared*. Despite great opposition, Daniel faithfully and righteously administered his God-given assignment with integrity. He administered his responsibilities in righteousness because He knew that one day he would inherit a kingdom of righteousness. Daniel also had practical skills in leadership and administration.

*Daniel 6:3-5 (NIV)*

***<sup>3</sup> Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators (practical skills) and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. <sup>4</sup> At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs (governing righteously in light of his future assignment as a ruler in Jesus' kingdom, cf. Dan. 7:27), but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. <sup>5</sup> Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."***

F. In August we are going to begin diversifying our activities on Friday nights. On the first Friday night of every month, we are going to have a corporate solemn prayer assembly. This will be open to all whom the Lord will bring. On the second Friday of every month, we will have an Emmaus Road Gathering. These will be an extended time of Bible teaching, similar to what we have been doing. On the third Friday night of every month, we will have

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a prophetic forum. During these we will take time to discuss what the Holy Spirit has been speaking to those participating in the forum. On the fourth Friday night of every month, we will conduct "preparation seminars." These will focus on the impartation of practical skills that will benefit the saints as the earth passes deeper into the shakings prophesied in Matthew 24.

1. Last week we focused our attention on the fourth "P" — preparation. We pointed out that biblical Christianity is preparatory at its very core. There is no such thing as non-preparatory Christianity. Jesus is preparing His Bride to stand faithful through severe persecution at the end of the age.
2. We also saw how the issue of preparation is primarily an issue of God's wisdom versus man's wisdom. In many places in scripture, the Lord tells us that the people of God are going to face extremely hard times at the end of the age. Will we believe God's Word even when everything around us seems to be going on business as usual? Will we, like Noah, walk in the fear of the Lord, scorn what this world calls wisdom, and build an ark before the storm comes? Will we labor to prepare ourselves, our friends, our families, our children in mind, hear, and hand? Will we believe God's Word and ask Him to help us build an ark that will float through the difficulties of Matthew 24?
3. Tonight we are going to focus our attention on the third "P" — prophecy. What is prophecy? Who gets to prophesy? What are some of the different ways God speaks to us? What is the difference between prophecy in the Old Testament and prophecy in the New? How can we, like Daniel, grow in our ability to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit?
4. My own story — Through high school and college, most of the Christian traditions I had been exposed to did not have a favorable disposition toward the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including gifts that would fall in the category of "the prophetic." Before I began encountering God's voice, quite honestly my Christian life felt so dry and boring. My walk with God became a whole new adventure when I really began to discover and experience more of the prophetic. Apart from regular encounter with God's voice, our hearts tend to shrivel. We were made to hear the voice of our Maker as we walk in intimate communion with Him.

## II. PROPHECY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Unfortunately, the concept of biblical prophecy is misunderstood by many believers today. Many fail to realize that an important shift in the prophetic occurred from Old to New Testament. In order to adequately understand the nature prophecy following the ascension of Jesus, we must first look at prophecy in the Old Testament.
- B. In the Old Testament, authentic prophets typically received a special commission from God through some type of divine encounter (e.g. 1 Sam. 1, Is. 6, Jer. 1, Ezek. 1).

*1 Samuel 3:1, 10-11, 19-21 (NIV)*

***1 The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions... 10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." 11 And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do***

***something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle...<sup>19</sup> The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground.<sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD.<sup>21</sup> The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.***

*Isaiah 6:1,5-8 (NIV)*

***<sup>1</sup> In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.<sup>5</sup> "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar.<sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."<sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"***

- C. In the Old Testament, prophets formed a distinct class or office within the nation of Israel (e.g. Dt. 18:14–22; 1 Sam. 10:10–11, 19:19–20; 1 Ki. 18:13)

*1 Kings 18:9-13 (NIV)*

***<sup>9</sup> "What have I done wrong," asked Obadiah, "that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to be put to death?<sup>10</sup> As surely as the LORD your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you.<sup>11</sup> But now you tell me to go to my master and say, 'Elijah is here.'<sup>12</sup> I don't know where the Spirit of the LORD may carry you when I leave you. If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn't find you, he will kill me. Yet I your servant have worshiped the LORD since my youth.<sup>13</sup> Haven't you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the LORD? I hid a hundred of the LORD's prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water.***

- D. Prophets prophesied through the Spirit's enablement (e.g. Nu. 11:29; 1 Sam. 10:6-10, 19:20; Neh. 9:30).

*1 Samuel 10:9-10 (NIV)*

***<sup>9</sup> As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day.<sup>10</sup> When they arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he joined in their prophesying.***

- E. Music and worship cultivated a spiritually "charged" atmosphere in which the prophetic flowed more readily.

*1 Samuel 10:5-6 (NIV)*

***<sup>5</sup> "After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them, and***

**they will be prophesying. <sup>6</sup> The Spirit of the LORD will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person.**

*2 Kings 3:11-16 (NIV)*

**<sup>11</sup> But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD through him?" An officer of the king of Israel answered, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah." <sup>12</sup> Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. <sup>13</sup> Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What do we have to do with each other? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother." "No," the king of Israel answered, "because it was the LORD who called us three kings together to hand us over to Moab." <sup>14</sup> Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you or even notice you. <sup>15</sup> But now bring me a harpist." While the harpist was playing, the hand of the LORD came upon Elisha <sup>16</sup> and he said, "This is what the LORD says..."**

- F. Prophets typically received their messages from God in the form of visions, dreams, and riddles, though God spoke in more direct speech to Moses.

*Numbers 12:5-8 (NIV)*

**<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, <sup>6</sup> he said, "Listen to my words: "When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. <sup>7</sup> But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. <sup>8</sup> With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"**

- G. Prophets often foretold future events (e.g., 1 Sam. 3:11–14; 1 Ki. 13; Is. 11; Jer. 20:4)

*1 Kings 13:1-5 (NIV)*

**<sup>1</sup> By the word of the LORD a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. <sup>2</sup> He cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD: "O altar, altar! This is what the LORD says: 'A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.' " <sup>3</sup> That same day the man of God gave a sign: "This is the sign the LORD has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out." <sup>4</sup> When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. <sup>5</sup> Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD.**

- H. Prophets also sometimes gave council and personal direction on the Lord's behalf (e.g., 1 Sam. 9:9, 22:5).

1 Samuel 22:3-5 (NIV)

**<sup>3</sup> From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, "Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?" <sup>4</sup> So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold. <sup>5</sup> But the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah." So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.**

- I. The primary function of the prophetic office in the Old Testament was to regularly summon the people of God to obey the stipulations of their covenant with God (e.g., Judg. 6:7–9; 1 Ki. 18:37; 2 Ki. 17:13; 2 Chr. 36:15–16; Jer. 35:15; Joel 2:28–29).

Judges 6:7-10 (NIV)

**<sup>7</sup> When the Israelites cried to the LORD because of Midian, <sup>8</sup> he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>9</sup> I snatched you from the power of Egypt and from the hand of all your oppressors. I drove them from before you and gave you their land. <sup>10</sup> I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."**

Nehemiah 9:29-30 (NIV)

**<sup>29</sup> "You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them. Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, became stiff-necked and refused to listen. <sup>30</sup> For many years you were patient with them. By your Spirit you admonished them through your prophets.**

- J. For good reason, God's standards for the prophetic office were quite high in the Old Testament. Prophets who used their influence to preach rebellion against the God of Israel, who spoke in the name of other gods, or who prophesied messages that did not come to pass, were false in God's eyes and therefore were to be put to death (Dt. 13:1–5, 18:20–22).

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 (NIV)

**<sup>20</sup> But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death."<sup>21</sup> You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" <sup>22</sup> If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.**

### III. PROPHECY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. The prophet Joel prophesied that one day God would pour out his Spirit on all God's people—something Moses had desired all along (Nu. 11:29)—and that when this happened, spiritual gifts of a prophetic nature would be made available to the saints on a less specialized basis (Jo. 2:28–29). Peter cited this passage to explain the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Ac. 2:16–21).

Acts 2:14-21 (NIV)

***14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."***

Numbers 11:29 (NIV)

***But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"***

- B. The day had come, therefore, when God's Spirit would enable all of God's people to prophesy in some sense. However, what did this actually mean in practical terms? Would all of God's people function in the prophetic office as defined in the Old Testament? Would all of them be commissioned by God to foretell future events with accuracy? Would all be called to the same high standards of the Old Testament prophet?
- C. On the one hand, it appears that in some more rare instances certain individuals may still be called to a prophetic office that more closely approximates the Old Testament standard (Ac. 11:27–28, 13:1, 15:32, 21:10–11; Eph. 4:11), with the exception that prophetic words delivered by such ministers are never to be touted as Scripture. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, those in the office of post-Pentecost prophet must testify only to the God of Israel and in the name of the God of Israel, who is now made known in Messiah Jesus. Furthermore, they must never use their influence to turn people away from the one true God or to unbiblical doctrines. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, they may be called at times to deliver words related to future events, those that provide counsel of some sort, and others that apply more on a corporate level. However, also like the Old Testament prophets, their primary function is to regularly call the people of God to wholeheartedly obey the stipulations of God's covenant with them – in our case, the New Covenant. It is fair to assume that God's standard for ministers entrusted with this kind of authority more closely approximates the high standards for prophets in the Old Testament.

Acts 11:27-30 (NIV)

***27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) (Luke showing that Agabus was a true prophet, cf. Deut. 18). 29 The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. 30 This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.***

- D. On the other hand, the New Testament is also clear that following the day of Pentecost, prophetic gifts are no longer confined strictly to a special class of prophets. All believers have the capacity to hear Jesus' voice through the Spirit on some level, and are admonished to eagerly desire spiritual gifts of a prophetic nature for the purpose of encouraging and edifying other members of the Body of Christ. Prophetic words are meant by God to help us "fight the good fight," and cling more tightly to faith and a good conscience before God.

*John 10:1-5 (NIV)*

***1 "I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. 3 The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."***

*1 Corinthians 14:1-5 (ESV)*

***1 Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 2 For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. 5 Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.***

*1 Timothy 1:18-19 (NIV)*

***18 Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, 19 holding on to faith and a good conscience.***

- E. We need to demystify the prophetic. It really is a simple concept. Prayer is us speaking to God. Prophecy is God speaking to us. Prophecy simply means hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit and receiving communications from our Maker. Sometimes we speak these out to others, sometimes not. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who loves to lead His sheep by His voice. He speaks to us personally and through others to strengthen us in faith, love, and righteousness as we run the race toward the New Jerusalem.
- F. Prophetic words typically come in the form of a light inner impression, a picture in the mind's eye or vision, an inward "knowing," a small whisper in our hearts, a dream in the night, etc. Sometimes God even surrounds us with recurring numbers (e.g. story of woman in Kansas City, and life verses). They do not carry the same weight as the words delivered by the Old Testament prophets to the nation of Israel. However, they are nevertheless prophetic in nature.

G. Because the saints “know in part and prophesy in part” (1 Cor. 13:9), prophecy is portrayed in the New Testament as more of an art than a science. On the one hand, because the Holy Spirit lives in God’s people and is genuinely involved in the process of prophesying on some level, and because prophetic words are meant to strengthen us in our faith, we must not treat “lower-level” utterances with contempt. Rather, should value them even if they seem small and don’t feel overly “dramatic.”

*1 Thessalonians 5:19 (NIV)*

***Do not put out the Spirit’s fire;***

H. On the other hand, because these Spirit-induced impressions are being communicated to and through weak human vessels, we must also approach such words with spiritual discernment. We must “test everything” and “hold on to the good,” letting God blow away any chaff that may be mixed in the word.

*1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 (NIV)*

***<sup>19</sup> Do not put out the Spirit’s fire; <sup>20</sup> do not treat prophecies with contempt. <sup>21</sup> Test everything. Hold on to the good.***

I. All words that clearly contradict sound biblical teaching are to be immediately discarded.

*2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 (NIV)*

***<sup>1</sup> Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, <sup>2</sup> not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. <sup>3</sup> Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.***

J. We do learn from the New Testament that while all of God’s people can hear the Spirit’s voice, the Holy Spirit does gift some in the area of prophecy more than others. This doesn’t mean that they are necessarily a “big-P” prophet like Agabus. But they do walk in a prophetic grace not common to all either. They are more toward the middle of the spectrum.

*1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NIV)*

***<sup>7</sup> Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.***

*Romans 12:6-8 (NIV)*

***<sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. <sup>7</sup> If it is serving, let him serve; if it***

***is teaching, let him teach; <sup>8</sup> if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.***

- K. Most prophetic words involve the three-fold process of trying to accurately receive, interpret, and apply the word with care and sensitivity. We grow in our maturity in and stewardship of the prophetic over time.

#### IV. SOME PRACTICALS RELATING TO THE PROPHETIC

- A. I highly encourage you to read one or more of the following resources: Dallas Willard, *In Search of Guidance: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993); Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God: How God Speaks Today Through Prophecies, Dreams, and Visions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996); Mark and Patty Virkler, *How to Hear God's Voice* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2005).
- B. Please read "Principles of Christian Dream Interpretation" by Mark and Patty Virkler by the first prophetic forum. We won't follow all of the guidelines in this article, but will incorporate a number of them. You can download the article from <http://www.cwgministries.org/books/Christian-Dream-Interpretation.pdf>.

#### V. CONCLUSION

- A. In this hour, many people inside and outside the church are listening to every voice but God's. These prophetic forums on the third Friday of every month are one small way of expressing to God our sincere desire to stand in His council and agree with His plans in light of the storm of the Lord that will burst forth at the end of the age.

*Jeremiah 23:16-22 (NIV)*

***<sup>16</sup> This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD. <sup>17</sup> They keep saying to those who despise me, 'The LORD says: You will have peace.' And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, 'No harm will come to you.' <sup>18</sup> But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD to see or to hear his word? Who has listened and heard his word? <sup>19</sup> See, the storm of the LORD will burst out in wrath, a whirlwind swirling down on the heads of the wicked. <sup>20</sup> The anger of the LORD will not turn back until he fully accomplishes the purposes of his heart. In days to come you will understand it clearly. <sup>21</sup> I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. <sup>22</sup> But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds.***