

**SPIRITUAL GIFTS  
THE GIFT OF PROPHECY  
1 CORINTHIANS 12:28**

**Second in order of merit are prophets or those with the gift of prophecy.**

**I. PROPHECY DEFINED.**

*“Prophecy” is “inspired (i.e. God-breathed) speech. It is the message or words of a prophet. Depending on the situation, this message took the form of **prediction, direction, correction, or encouragement.**”*

*“To Prophecy” = “To speak by inspiration.”*

*2 Timothy 3:16 – “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”*

*Noah Webster’s 1828 American Dictionary of the English Language defines prophet this way: “In Scripture, a person illuminated, inspired or instructed by God to announce future events.”*

**II. PROPHECY DETECTED.**

**A. Old Testament Prophets.**

In the Old Testament, the prophets were holy men of God who were sent by God to speak the Word of God to their generation.

*2 Peter 1:21 – “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 Ghost.”*

*Luke 1:70 – “As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:”*

**Look at what the Old Testament says about prophets and prophecy:**

**Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:15, 18-22  
Ezekiel 13:1-3**

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Though prediction of the future was sometimes an important part of the prophecies, the emphasis was not on **prediction** but rather on just **setting forth what God has said!**  
i.e. *“Thus saith the LORD...”*

**B. New Testament Prophets.**

The gift of Prophecy in the New Testament Church was evident in both the *foretelling of the future and a special ability to edify believers by conveying authoritative messages from the Lord.*

The gift of prophecy in its truest form was much the same as that of the Old Testament...i.e. **setting forth or telling forth what God has said.**

In the New Testament, much of what God said during this time came from the *“Prophet”* that Moses referred to in the book of Deuteronomy 18:15-22! (i.e. The Messiah, Jesus)

Jesus was and is the *Immanuel*, i.e. the *God with us!* His teachings and preaching are important especially to His building of His Church! **(Matthew 16:13-19)**

Before the canon of New Testament Scripture was completed, the gift of prophecy was necessary in the establishment of the foundation of the Church. (Just as much as the Apostles!)

How else would the early Church have known the teachings of Christ and the doctrines necessary to establish His Church?

Telling forth the truth would have been as essential in the early stages of the local Churches that were established as the preaching of the truth is in our day and time!

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Understand that after the Ascension of Jesus Christ the only written Scriptures were the Old Testament scrolls and not everyone even had a copy of the Old Testament Scriptures!

Even before “Gospels” were written it was important that the truths contained in them be a part of the foundation of the Church. This was only possible through the gifts of the apostles and the prophets.

The cost of hand-copied books was high, so high in fact that according to an estimate that I saw by A.Q. Morton, *“a gospel represents in papyrus alone a year’s wages and a New Testament about eight years’ pay of a skilled workman.”* (Penguin Science News, No. 43, London, 1957, p. 26)

Few believers could look forward to owning a Bible. So, the function of Prophets and teachers were tremendously important in the early Church!

True prophecy welcomes examination and will stand the test!  
*1 John 4:1–“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”*

*1 Thessalonians 5:21–“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”*

*PROPHECY DEFINED...PROPHECY DETECTED.*

**III. PROPHECY DEPARTED. (1 Corinthians 13:8-11)**

Prophecy as a gift will *“fail”* or *“cease”*. The Greek word translated as *“fail”* means, in today's terms, *“be made redundant, because replaced by another.”* It has the meaning of *“being made useless, abolished as of no use, to be (render) entirely idle (useless), literally or figuratively:*

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According to the Strongs Concordance, the Greek word translated as *“fail”* here is also translated elsewhere in Scripture as *abolish, cease, cumber, deliver, destroy, do away, become (make) of no (none, without) effect, fail, loose, bring (come) to nought, put away (down), vanish away, make void.*

Scripture is very clear here that the *“gift of prophecy”* would cease or be done away with! So, the question before us is, *“Why is this so?”*

The only answer we should really need is *“because God said so!”* But we are given some insight as to the *“why”* in **verses 9-11.**

Over against the permanence of *“faith, hope, and charity”* or *“love”* Paul sets the certain passing away of gifts.

He said *“Prophecies will fail”*. *Prophecies* are the setting forth of what God says to men through the prophet.

**Vs. 9** says, *“For we know in part, and we prophecy in part.”* Prophets were only given a partial glimpse of truth that was needed for the people and moment they were prophesying in.

I think we can all understand that no one prophet was given the entirety of what God said either in the Old Testament or New Testament.

**Vs. 10** says, *“But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”*

Understand that the phrase *“...that which is perfect”* has the idea of *“the destined end or aim.”* It points to God’s plan for His revelation.

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When God's full revelation to man in the form of the written Scriptures was completed, all the parts came together to form "*that which is perfect.*" We now have the complete, authoritative, perfect, Word of God as our guide!

*2 Timothy 3:16-17—“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”*

There are no need for prophets today who are revealing anything other than what the completed canon of Scripture reveals!

The completed Word of God tells us **what God wants us to know about the future!** Additionally, it gives us **all the authoritative messages we need to edify one another in the Lord!** Men of God today are to "*proclaim*" the messages of this authoritative Book!

The completed Canon of Scripture gives us all that we need to mature in the faith!

The completed Canon of Scripture also gives us all that we need to "*try the spirits whether they are of God*" and to "*prove all things*" that we hear by!