

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! In this edition I'll be discussing the spirit of prophecy as described in the scriptures.

I would encourage you to go to <https://thechurchofjesuschrist.info> as I continue to update the site. I have links to several specific features below. Let me know what you think, whether you have any suggestions, or any requests.

As always, I'm extending an invitation for submissions to be published in The Gospel Notes Newsletter (TGNN). Additionally, if you have a subject or a question that you would like to have covered in a future edition of TGNN, feel free to send me a note and I'll do my best to address it.

The primary criteria for inclusion of articles are these:

1. It should be oriented towards the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. It should use the scriptures as a source of information.
3. It should include references for any quoted 3rd party sources.
4. It should not be political.

If you have a testimony to share, please send that to me and let me know if you would like it to be included in a future edition of the newsletter. Please keep in mind the four criteria listed above where applicable.

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The Spirit of Prophecy

By Jared Edson

Revelation 19:9-10

9 And he saith unto me, Write: Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See that thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God; **for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**

Jacob 3:7-9

7 Wherefore, we search the prophets; and **we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses, we obtain a hope; and our faith becometh unshaken**, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus, and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea;

8 Nevertheless, the Lord God showeth us our weakness, that we may know that it is by his grace and his great condescensions unto the children of men that we have power to do these things.

9 Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord!

To remove any confusion, the title of this article is not intended to show that I will be giving a prophecy, but to discuss the subject of prophecy.

There are some churches that believe prophecy is one of the required witnesses that a believer has received the Holy Ghost, either through speaking in tongues or otherwise, suggesting that without this witness the receipt of the Holy Ghost has not taken place. This is easily debunked by the baptism of Jesus himself, who gave no prophecy and spoke in no tongues at the time of his baptism.

There are two main lines of thought that I have when I think upon what the angel told John, saying, “**the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy**” – specifically,

1. Testimonies one receives **about** Jesus are the spirit of prophecy
2. Testimonies given **by** Jesus are the spirit of prophecy

As I understand prophecy, both of these have merit and are true in those circumstances where they apply. I would like to look at both of these in their proper context.

Testimonies one receives about Jesus are the spirit of prophecy

One of the gifts described in scripture is the gift of knowing that Jesus is the son of God. We find that in the following passages:

Matthew 16:16-18 (Inspired Version), 15-17 (King James Version)

16 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

17 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

18 And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.**

By knowing that the Father revealed this to Peter, we know it is a gift because Jesus says he was blessed by this knowledge.

James 1:17 ***Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights***, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

It seems pretty clear that this gift given to Peter is a “***good gift***” or perhaps even a “***perfect gift***.”

We also find it clearly spelled out in the Doctrine and Covenants:

Doctrine and Covenants 46:5d (RLDS)

5d ***To some it is given by the Holy Ghost to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*** and that he was crucified for the sins of the world;

Peter received this double knowledge – that Jesus is the Christ, and that he is the son of God. This is a testimony from heaven ***about*** Jesus, and it could not come from any other source, as we can be reasonably certain that Satan would have no interest in revealing this to him.

Clearly Peter received this knowledge from God, and whether it was spoken to him by a voice or by impress of the spirit of God we don't know for certain; all that we do know is that Peter was given this knowledge from heaven.

Testimonies come in many forms, with Peter himself later having visions from the Lord, and with the Lord also speaking to him from time to time. The source is the same in either case – the Lord did this. Here we need to stop for a moment to make some fundamental observations that directly tie into this subject concerning the identity of Jesus, as that seems to have some bearing on the nature of the spirit of prophecy.

John 10:30 ***I and my Father are one***.

Ether 1:77 Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. ***Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son***.

Mosiah 8:28-29

28 And now, Abinadi said unto them, ***I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men*** and shall redeem his people;
29 ***And because he dwelleth in flesh, he shall be called the Son of God***;

It would be an error to suggest that Jesus is fundamentally a different person from the Father. The prophet Abinadi was burned at the stake for testifying that Jesus is the God about whom the scriptures speak, being given flesh. It was Jesus, after all, who spoke to Moses from the burning bush:

Exodus 3:2-4, 13-14

2 And again, **the presence of the Lord appeared unto him**, in a flame of fire in the midst of a bush; and he looked; and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight--why the bush is not consumed.

4 And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, **God called unto him out of the midst of the bush** and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.

...

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

14 **And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM**; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM hath sent me unto you**.

John 8:56-58

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Before Abraham was, I am**.

The name God gave to Moses to identify the God of their fathers was “I AM.” Jesus repeated this to the Jews by saying “before Abraham was, I AM” (capitals added). Jesus had in fact made mention of this earlier, and it angered them at that time also:

John 5:17-8

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore, the Jews sought the more to kill him because he had not only broken the Sabbath but **said also that God was his father, making himself equal with God**.

The Jews understood perfectly who Jesus was claiming to be, but they did not believe this could be true; they therefore sought to kill Jesus to end this perceived blasphemy.

When Peter received his testimony about who Jesus was, this testimony came from God, whom Jesus claimed to be in no uncertain terms. **“Thou art the Christ, the son of the Living God.”** According to Moroni’s abridgment of the book of Ether, Jesus made known to the Brother of Jared at that time that he was the Father and the Son, even before Jesus would take upon himself flesh. This was not just a case of “the father is in me, and I in him” as it was when Jesus was born in Bethlehem into flesh, but this was a condition of being that existed prior to Jesus’ birth – meaning that he was literally the Father and the Son even before being born to the flesh. One Spirit, One God.

Just so that we don't leave it out, we should look to the Inspired version's account of Adam's baptism, in which is revealed something additional.

Genesis 4:9 (Inspired version only)

9 And in that day, **the Holy Ghost** fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, **saying, I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning**, henceforth and forever; that, as thou hast fallen, thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.

The language of this scripture is so powerful because we often forget that the Holy Ghost is part of this same identity. Indeed, the statement is so often overlooked that we miss the importance of how it is stated – specifically that it was the Holy Ghost which said, “**I am the Only Begotten of the Father**”. If Jesus is the Only Begotten Son of God, then how can the Holy Ghost also be the Only Begotten of the Father? It must be because Jesus and the Holy Ghost and the Father are the exact same being, having no separation of identity. This is the one true living God.

Ether 1:30 And he had sworn in his wrath unto the Brother of Jared that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, **the true and only God**, or they should be swept off when the fullness of his wrath should come upon them.

Any testimony of Jesus is the testimony of God, and any testimony of the Holy Ghost, is the testimony of God. The very existence of this set of realizations means that the Gifts of the Spirit, as we often quote from 1 Corinthians 12, are the gifts of Jesus Christ to us. Is it any wonder, then, that the gift of prophecy should be a testimony of, or as in this case, about Jesus? Or that for prophecy - true prophecy - to be given, one must be blessed with the Spirit of God?

I realize this may be a hard pill to swallow for some, because many have been taught for the most part of their lives that God consists of two or three persons, unified in purpose and separate in function. The reality is that while we were created in the image of God (not gods, as of several, but of one), many other characteristics must be quite different from those of God. We were created in the image of God, but we are not God, and we are not like God. Our limitations are extreme, whereas God is not limited.

Such reasoning about a three-in-one God is not without some evidence in the scriptures, and it is not a matter of “I have more scriptures to prove my point than you have to prove your point.” Jesus makes it very plain about his identity - the Jews knew it, and Abinidi was burned to death for stating it. Jesus went to the cross in no small part because of whom he claimed to be, not just because the Jews felt that he threatened to dismantle their power base. Much confusion about this is simply a matter of semantics – variances in how the language is used -- which I will not address at this time.

Testimonies given by Jesus are the spirit of prophecy

Jacob 3:19-20

19 Behold, my brethren, he that prophesieth, let him prophesy to the understanding of men; for ***the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not.***

20 Wherefore, ***it speaketh of things as they really are and of things as they really will be;*** wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly for the salvation of our souls.

If, as we have already discussed, Jesus and the Holy Ghost are one, then we can do a simple in-place substitution and get the same meaning, but with a slightly different emphasis.

Jacob 3:19-20 (alternate wording)

19 Behold, my brethren, he that prophesieth, let him prophesy to the understanding of men; for Jesus Christ speaketh the truth and lieth not.

20 Wherefore, Jesus Christ speaketh of things as they really are and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly for the salvation of our souls.

(substituting “Jesus Christ” for “the spirit” and “it” for the purposes of comparison only - JE)

We find Jesus using similar language throughout the gospel accounts:

Luke 4:25 But ***I tell you the truth:*** many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and great famine was throughout all the land;

Luke 9:27 Verily, ***I tell you of a truth:*** There are some standing here who shall not taste of death until they see the kingdom of God coming in power.

John 8:45 And because ***I tell you the truth,*** ye believe me not.

John 16:7 Nevertheless, ***I tell you the truth:*** It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

Jesus tells the truth – about things that are and really will be.

Prophecy must be truth if it is from God, otherwise it cannot bear the mark of the creator of all things. Is it any wonder that a prophet who gives a false prophecy is in such great danger of life and limb?

Jeremiah 23:30-32

30 Therefore, behold, ***I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal my words, everyone from his neighbor.***

31 Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say, He saith.

32 Behold, ***I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies and by their lightness; yet I sent them not nor commanded them;*** therefore, they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.

Examples in the scriptures about the end of those who do such things are rather grisly and sobering.

Jeremiah 28:15-17

15 Then said the prophet Jeremiah unto Hananiah, the prophet, ***Hear now, Hananiah; the Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lie.***

16 ***Therefore, thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth; this year thou shalt die because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord.***

17 So Hananiah, the prophet, died the same year in the seventh month.

From this we can see that the Lord takes it very seriously when someone prophesies in his name and does not have the Spirit to provide the utterance. The words that a true prophecy contains are those given by the Spirit to the individual to utter, and the Lord takes ownership of those words.

In other words, these are words given either by the voice of the Lord to the prophet, or by the impress of the Spirit to the prophet to speak. It is the same spirit, as we find written by Paul in his letter describing the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 12 and in his letter to the Ephesians:

1 Corinthians 12:3-14

3 Wherefore, I give you to understand that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can know that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but ***the same Spirit.***

5 And there are differences of administrations, but ***the same Lord.***

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is ***the same God*** which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge ***by the same Spirit;***

9 To another faith ***by the same Spirit;*** to another the gifts of healing ***by the same Spirit;***

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

11 But all these worketh that ***one and the selfsame Spirit,*** dividing to every man severally as he will.

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

13 For ***by one Spirit*** are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink ***into one Spirit.***

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

Ephesians 4:4-6

4 In **one body and one Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling:

5 **One Lord**, one faith, one baptism,

6 **One God and Father of all**, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

The reason why it is so important for Paul to emphasize that it is the “one Spirit” of God in whom all things are gathered together, is something for us to understand and take note of. Each of these gifts which are given to men are for their profit and learning, for their edification, and ultimately for their salvation and eternal life.

The spirit of prophecy, or in other words, the testimony of Jesus, is given to accomplish some action that is useful for the purposes of God towards us. Jesus also testified that his words are Spirit and Life:

John 6:63 **It is the Spirit that quickeneth**; the flesh profiteth nothing; **the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.**

Alma 18:12 Behold, **he is the life and the light** of the world. Behold, **he is the word of truth and righteousness.**

Ether 1:108 For behold, **I am the Father; I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world.**

When Jesus gives us his word, he is also giving a part of himself because he is the word made flesh. His word – his Spirit - is light and life and truth. The gifts of the Spirit are not something we can achieve, but they must be freely given gifts handed down from heaven for us to receive some benefit. One cannot decide one day to prophesy a true prophecy without having the Spirit to provide the gift.

Perhaps this is why some view prophecy differently than the other gifts, even though they all provide some benefit for us. God’s Spirit is extra-temporal, meaning that he is not bound by the limitations of time as man is. When he testifies of “...**of things as they really are and of things as they really will be...**” it is not speculation or just good guessing. These are things he knows because he sees all of time in a single glance. He sees things as they are, not just because he is a good predictor, but because he has already experienced them. That is why his witness is true – they are testimonies of things that are future to us but present with him. No calculation has been, is, or ever will be necessary.

The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus because Jesus is a true witness of all things from the beginning to the end.

Revelation 3:14 And unto the servant of the church of the Laodiceans write: **These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness**, the beginning of the creation of God:

Revelation 22:13 ***I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end***, the first and the last.

1 John 5:6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ--not by water only, but by water and blood. ***And it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth.***

It is just as easy for God to speak of things that have taken place in the past, as it is for him to tell us of things to come, as to describe things as they currently are. We tend to call testimonies about the past “revelations” because they reveal things that have been, but revelations can also be about things that are and will be. Take, for example, the life and writings of Moses the servant of God, whom God gave a revelation concerning the history of the world from the beginning, which we call Genesis.

Genesis 1:1 (Inspired version) And it came to pass that ***the Lord spake unto Moses***, saying, ***Behold, I reveal unto you*** concerning this heaven and this earth; ***write the words which I speak.***

Isaiah 29:11-13 (Inspired version)

11 And it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall bring forth unto you the words of a book; and they shall be the words of them which have slumbered.

12 And behold, the book shall be sealed; and ***in the book shall be a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof.***

13 Wherefore, because of the things which are sealed up, the things which are sealed shall not be delivered in the day of the wickedness and abominations of the people. Wherefore, the book shall be kept from them.

Not only can God describe everything that has been, but all things that will be. He can do this because he has already seen it.

Isaiah 46:9-10

9 Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; ***I am God, and there is none like me,***

10 ***Declaring the end from the beginning***, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,

The Lord gave Moses the testimony that he did so that we might have the basis for a greater understanding of faith and the operations of God to bring about salvation to a fallen mankind. Prophecies of future events are the testimonies of God given through prophets for the same purpose, yet it is the same Spirit of God which revealed the past to Moses and revealed the future to John and others. It is the testimony of God to man, thus it is the testimony of Jesus to man. In this we find the angel had indeed spoken the truth to John about the spirit of prophecy.

