

# 12 Foundation Stones—Class 4A

## How to Receive Prophecies

### Hearing from Heaven, Part 1

#### Section 1: What Is Prophecy?

##### ➤ **Prayer includes listening to God**

As was discussed in "Prayer, Part 1: Principles and Practice," prayer is not meant to be a one-way conversation with the Lord in which you do all the talking! Your relationship with the Lord should also include listening to Him. Prayer is communion with the Lord, directly conversing with the Lord. You come to Him with quietness and respect and you sincerely present your petition, and you wait silently to get the answer. If you really want to hear Him, He'll talk to you.

*1 Samuel 3:9–10—Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. (10) Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."*

*Numbers 9:8—And Moses said to them, "Stand still, that I may hear what the Lord will command concerning you."*

*Psalms 4:4b—Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still.*

*Psalms 46:10a—Be still, and know that I am God.*

##### **Skits: The Story of Samuel**

The script of this skit is based on 1 Samuel 3:1–10. The students could be involved in acting this out.

##### ➤ **When God speaks...**

When the Lord speaks and gives a message through one of His people, we refer to such inspired utterances as "prophecy." Throughout the Bible the Lord spoke to His people this way, inspiring His prophets to give His words and messages.

In both the Old and New Testaments, God tells us that in the days prior to Jesus' Second Coming, a period known in the Scriptures as the "Time of the End," or the "Last Days," He is going to pour out His Spirit in a special way, anointing many of His servants to prophesy. He says,

*Acts 2:17–18 (also Joel 2:28–39)—And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. (18) And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.*

##### ➤ **Prophecy: One of the gifts of the Spirit**

When we ask the Lord to fill us with His Holy Spirit, we can then receive what the Bible calls the "gifts of the Spirit." These are special spiritual gifts from our Heavenly Father to strengthen and assist us in many different ways. The gift of prophecy is included among the nine basic gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:

*1 Corinthians 12:4,10–11—There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ... (10) to another prophecy ... (11) But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*

These are gifts from a loving Heavenly Father to His children to help communicate understanding of Himself and His Will.

In the Old Testament, only certain kings and prophets and leaders received the Holy Spirit and the whole burden of leadership fell on them. But when the New Testament age dawned, on the Day of Pentecost, God completely threw out the old system of making believers so totally dependent on human leadership for their guidance, and He made every single individual Christian responsible, directly, to His Own Holy Spirit.

Everyone can have just as much of the Holy Spirit as they want or can take, and should be led individually of the Lord. The Lord did this to prepare the Church (His followers) for an age when it was going to have to survive a lot of persecution and its members would need to be individually led by Him.

## ➤ **The desirable gift**

The Bible also tells us that the gift of prophecy in particular should be desired and sought by God's people. In other Bible passages we are encouraged to desire this spiritual gift, and to let God speak to us and through us via prophecy.

*1 Corinthians 14:1,5,39—Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. (5) I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the Church may receive edification. (39) Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.*

## ➤ **"Forthtelling"**

Many people think of "prophecy" as predicting the future, but this is not always the case. The word "prophecy" is taken from a Greek word propheteia that means "the speaking forth of the mind and counsel of God."

Prophets do a lot of foretelling under the inspiration of God's Spirit. But a further meaning of prophecy is to speak under divine inspiration, to forthtell the Words of God—to simply give God's Word, whatever it may be, whenever it may be, at any time, at any place, to any people, whenever it is God's will.

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## Section 2: About Prophecy in the Bible

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Let's look at some of the ways God has used the gift of prophecy to speak to His people through history.

## ➤ **Prophecy comes from God**

*2 Peter 1:21—For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

*Acts 3:21—God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

*Hosea 12:10—I have also spoken by the prophets, and have multiplied visions; I have given symbols through the witness of the prophets.*

*Romans 12:6—Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.*

## ➤ **Prophecy and prophets in the Old Testament**

In the days of Moses 70 elders prophesied

*Numbers 11:24–30—So Moses went out and told the people the Words of the Lord, and he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. (25) Then the Lord came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again. (26) But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. (27) And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." (28) So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, forbid them!" (29) Then Moses said to him, "Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (30) And Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders of Israel.*

Elijah was the main prophet, but there were at least 100 others:

*1 Kings 18:1,3–4—And it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth." (3) And Ahab had called Obadiah, who was in charge of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly. (4) For so it was, while Jezebel massacred the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.)*

Elisha's schools for prophets

(Elisha trained a group of prophets called "the sons of the prophets")

*2 Kings 2:3,5—Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha. ... (5) Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha.*

*2 Kings 4:38—And Elisha returned to Gilgal, and there was a famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets were sitting before him.*

*2 Kings 6:1—And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us."*

Samuel's group of prophets

*1 Samuel 19:20—Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.*

### ➤ **The Early Church and the gift of prophecy**

It is very interesting to study over the experience of the Early Church and how they not only got their directions from the written, recorded Word of God, but also relied on the gift of prophesy. Here are just a few examples of the first Christians' reliance on the Living Word (received through prophecy):

*Acts 11:27–30—And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. (28) Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. (29) Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. (30) This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*

*Acts 13:1–3—Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (2) As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (3) Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.*

*Acts 19:6—And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.*

*Acts 21:8–9—On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. (9) Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.*

*Acts 21:10–14—And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. (11) When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" (12) Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. (13) Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (14) So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."*

### ➤ **The gift of prophecy was a respected ministry in the Early Church**

*1 Corinthians 12:28—And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:20—Do not despise prophecies.*

*Romans 12:6—Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith.*

### ➤ **Conclusion: You can hear from Heaven too!**

Reading about some of the times God has spoken to His children in the past, as well as becoming familiar with His many promises to speak to you, will strengthen your faith that you, too, can hear from Heaven!