

Can a Nation Be Born in a Day? (Hint: Yes!)

Can a nation be born in a day? When God asks an outrageous question, He already knows the answer; and usually it is to make a strong point.

In this case, certainly one point is – “Is anything impossible for God?” And the obvious answer to any student of God’s Word is an obvious, “No!”

However, another more important point in the case of this question posed by God is – “Do I keep My promises?”

“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be given birth all at once? As soon as Zion was in labor, she also delivered her sons” (Isa. 66:8, NASB).

A Nation Born in a Day

I was born in 1952, only four years after the rebirth of the “land,” the nation of Israel, which occurred in 1948 so I can almost say this happened in my lifetime.

People worldwide have asked me, “In the past fifty years or so, what is God’s greatest prophetic event?”

I always give the same answer: The greatest prophetic occurrence in the past hundred years is the restoration of the Jewish people to their land of promise, which today is the country of Israel.

Over the years, the word *aliyah* (“ascent”) has become very dear to Jewish people and believing Gentiles alike, as prophetic Scriptures about the regathering of the Jewish people from the ends of the earth are fulfilled right before our eyes.

Aliyah, simply put, means to go from a lower place to a higher place – the process of returning to the homeland.

I believe that, throughout this book (*The Mystery of Israel and the Middle East*), the Holy Spirit is going to open your eyes so you realize that the God of the Bible is at work, even in the crucible times for the Jewish people, ordaining that they would come from the ends of the earth to be restored and returned to their homeland.

Isaiah 11:11–12 (NASB) says, “Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover with His hand the second time the remnant of His people... And He will lift up a flag for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

This prophecy is extremely important. Let me add that for every verse I give throughout this book, I can give many more that complement it. The Word of God confirms itself again and again, especially concerning His children.

The well-being of the Jewish people has always hinged on the balance of the level of their obedience to God, His faithful promises to their ancestors and His eternal purpose and love for them.

In general terms, when God’s people obey Him, they prosper. When they do not, they are judged.

This principle comes from Deuteronomy 28, and we see it repeatedly in action in the history of Israel (for example, in Judges 2:6–23). This biblical law of sowing and reaping still applies, even under the grace of God received through the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Twice Uprooted, Twice Restored

Over the millennia, Jacob’s descendants have suffered greatly

and have been greatly blessed as well. British Bible teacher Lance Lambert says of them:

“No other nation in the history of mankind has twice been uprooted from its land, scattered to the ends of the earth and then brought back again to that same territory. If the first exile and restoration was remarkable, then the second is miraculous. Israel has twice lost its statehood and its national sovereignty, twice had its capital and hub of religious life destroyed, its towns and cities razed to the ground, its people deported and dispersed, and then twice had it all restored again. Furthermore, no other nation or ethnic group has been scattered to the four corners of the earth, and yet survived as an easily identifiable and recognizable group.”

The first exile took place under Babylonian rule. As for the second great exile, Roman forces serving under the Roman commander Titus destroyed and dismantled Jerusalem in August AD 70, exactly as Jesus prophesied 37 years earlier. The Romans killed 600,000 Jewish residents and deported 300,000 more to locations scattered around the empire.

Sixty-five years later, the forces of Roman Emperor Hadrian crushed the last Jewish uprising, led by Bar Kokhba. Those Roman forces hated and persecuted Jewish and Gentile followers of Christ. Some observers believe this might have helped plant early seeds of anti-Semitism in the fledgling church.

Hadrian's hatred for the Jews burned so brightly that he changed Jerusalem's name to "Aelia Capitolina" (his given name was Aelius) and declared it "a Roman city forever which no Jew could enter under pain of death." He built a temple to Jupiter on the site of the former temple where sacrifices had been made to Jehovah. Then he renamed the land "Syria Palaestina" (Latin for *Philistia*).

Caesar overlooked an important detail: Unlike the powerless

gods of Rome, the God of Israel was and is alive and well. The Jewish people in Jerusalem and Judea were recaptured, died violent deaths or were scattered to distant lands. This second dispersion, following the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, lasted far longer than the first. It would not end after five hundred – or even a thousand – years.

Jerusalem: The Center of God's Heart

The devastated city of Jerusalem became the most contested urban real estate on earth, as for two thousand years various nations, empires and religious factions battled for its possession.

All the while, its builders and original residents – the Jewish people – were forced to seek refuge in Gentile cities and nations around the world, which none could call home. That all changed in one day, as I discuss in great detail toward the end of this chapter. Eighteen hundred and thirteen years after the destruction of Jerusalem under Hadrian, a new nation emerged from the birth pangs of World War II and the horrible Holocaust, just as Isaiah prophesied (see Isaiah 66:8).

Before every birth must come birth pangs. The Scriptures clearly predicted the two great dispersions and the persecutions they represented. They also describe the regathering of the Jewish people and the rebirth of Israel.

Yes, Jerusalem is in the center of God's heart and attention.

It is the only city mentioned in the entire Bible for which all peoples in all generations are to pray by name. The existence of Jerusalem under Jewish rule is a modern-day miracle – an authentic fulfillment of the prophetic Word of God. Indeed, God's jealousy rests over the destiny of this great city. Prophecy is written about this ancient, walled dwelling place.

Our posture toward the reunification of the city of Jerusalem

under Jewish rule is important to God. And what is important to God must become important to His people.

God Keeps His Promises

Friend, this is our story; this is God's story. I want you to see the fingerprints of God throughout world history as well as throughout His Word. God is faithful who promises and keeps His promises.

Israel is the only nation on earth that was born in a day.

The supernatural intervention of God prepared the ancient homeland for His displaced covenant people, bringing them back to their land and birthing their nation in a day.

Truly God is a covenant-keeping God and He is faithful in fulfilling His promises.

If you want to read the full account of How God fulfilled His promises to Israel by restoring her as a nation, I encourage you to purchase my book, *The Mystery of Israel and the Middle East*.

A Personal Prayer

Holy and mighty God, I marvel at the details of Your ways. I declare that Your Word has not returned empty and void, but You have watched over Your Word to fulfill it. You brought forth a homeland for Your covenant people. I declare, therefore, that the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah are true, and I rejoice in their fulfillment. Help me to celebrate and pray for the fulfillment of all your promises to come. Amen and amen. {eoa}

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ministering in more than 50 nations sharing the love of Jesus, imparting the power of intercession, prophetic ministry and life in the Spirit. He has recorded numerous classes with corresponding curriculum kits and is the author of more than 50 books, including The Seer, The Prophet, The Discerner, The Lost Art of Intercession and Praying with God's Heart. James is also the founder of GOLL Ideation LLC, where creativity, consulting and leadership training come together.

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Does Scripture Command Me to Pray for Israel and the Middle East?

Does God's Word give any clear directives specifically to pray for Israel and the Middle East?

We are not to be blown around by every whimsical wind of doctrine or the latest fad that hits the charismatic shores. We must be grounded in the Word of God. We must be knowledgeable of what the Scriptures have to say on a given matter. God is not impressed with our opinions or our preconceived, prejudicial thinking. God's Word has the authority and the final say!

To know God's heart, we must diligently study God's Word as a prerequisite to being approved as a workman in His vineyard. If we are going to be effective intercessors, we must learn to pray the Word of God.

With that in mind, I am veering away from my typical prophetic teaching article and presenting a short road map giving biblical intercession as you pray for Israel and the Middle East.

Biblical Intercessory Prayers for Israel

From the Life of Moses

- Exodus 32:11-13, 31-32 – Moses' cry to the Lord on behalf of the Israelites is based on God's reputation and covenant, as well as for the sake of His glory.
- Deuteronomy 9:18-19, 25-29 – Moses' fasting for forty days involved intervening for Israel in a time of great crisis.
- Deuteronomy 30:1-10 – This is a proclamation of restoration, as taught to the descendants of Israel in the desert.
- Numbers 14:13-19 – This is a plea for God to demonstrate His power, followed by an intense cry for pardon according to God's great lovingkindness.

From the Life of Nehemiah

- Nehemiah 1:4-11 – This a compassionate plea before God to forgive His people.

From the Life of Solomon

- 1 Kings 8:46-53 – This a simple prayer for God to forgive, now and in the future as He has in the past.

From the Lives of Asaph and the Sons of Korah

- Psalm 44:26 (NASB): "Rise up, be our help, and redeem

us!”

- Psalm 74 – An appeal to God amid the devastation of the land by the enemy.
- Psalm 79 – This is a lament over the destruction of Jerusalem and a cry for help.
- Psalm 80:2-3: “Save us!... Restore us!”
- Psalm 83 – This is a prayer for the Lord to confound His enemies.
- Psalm 85 – This is a powerful prayer for God’s mercy on the nation.
- Psalm 123:3 (NASB): “Be gracious to us, Lord.”

From the Life of Joel

- Joel 1:8, 13-14 – A call for a solemn assembly.
- Joel 2:12-17 – This is an intercessory cry to, “spare Your people, Lord.”

From the Life of Isaiah

- Isaiah 58:1 (NASB): “Cry loudly, do not hold back.”
- Isaiah 62:1, 6 (NASB): “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not keep quiet... All day and all night [God’s watchmen] will never keep silent.”
- Isaiah 63:15-64:12 – This includes a desperate prayer for mercy and help.

From the Life of Jeremiah

- Jeremiah 9:1 (NASB): “I... weep day and night.”
- Jeremiah 14:7-9, 17-22 – Verse 7 (NASB) emphasizes, “Lord, act for the sake of Your name! Our apostasies have indeed been many, we have sinned against You.”
- Jeremiah 15:5 is a plea amid judgment.
- Lamentations 3:49–50 (NASB): “My eyes flow unceasingly, without stopping, until the Lord looks down and sees from heaven.”
- Lamentations 5:21 (NASB): “Restore us to You, Lord, so

that we may be restored.”

From the Life of Daniel

- Daniel 6:10 – Gives us the example of praying three times each day.
- Daniel 9:19 (NASB): “Lord, hear! Lord, forgive! Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” Daniel’s prayer of confession, on behalf of his people, is our balanced, biblical model to follow today.

Practical Suggestions to Pray for Israel and the Middle East

Perform acts of identifying repentance (identifying for the sins of a nation or the church, whether you have committed them yourself). Cry out to the Lord with brokenness that our Father would forgive us, the church, for our apathy and fear, and for not speaking up and acting with righteousness in past times of history.

Pray for an awakening. Ask the Lord to awaken the global church of Jesus Christ in this hour to the immediacy and urgency of this message. Intercede that the Lord would raise up modern-day Esthers, Josephs, Daniels and Deborahs “for such a time as this.”

Pray for protection. Pray for places of safety and refuge to be raised up in anticipation of times of persecution of the Jewish people. Intercede that the enemy’s plans would be thwarted and that God’s destiny for the Jewish people would be fulfilled in this generation.

Pray for a movement of signs and wonders. Petition the Lord to release an increase of His presence with a movement of signs and wonders. Pray that the blinders would fall off the eyes of the Jewish people, and that they would recognize and receive Jesus Christ as their sovereign Lord.

Prayers for Peace

Use God's favor on you to pray for peace: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests" (Luke 2:14, NIV).

– The world is full of tribulation but in Him nations can experience peace: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (see John 16:33, NIV).

– God is peace: "Gideon built an altar to the Lord there and called it The Lord Is Peace" (see Judg. 6:24, NIV).

– God can heal every relationship – personal and far away, "'creating praise on their lips. Peace, peace, to those far and near,' says the Lord. 'And I will heal them'" (see Isa. 57:19, NIV).

– Israel is a small country amid known and unknown enemies. "But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds . . . because you are called an outcast, Zion for whom no one cares" (see Jer. 30:17, NIV).

– If persecution is because of righteousness, God blesses people and places: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (see Matt. 5:10, NIV).

– Peace in hearts and nations must begin with love: "I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (see Matt. 5:44, NIV).

– Blessings and peace are rewards of praying for those who are deceived: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (see Rom. 12:14, NIV).

– God will judge the nations for their treatment of God's people: "I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will put them on trial for what

they did to my inheritance, my people Israel, because they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land” (see Joel 3:2, NIV).

Reasons to Pray for the Middle East

– Daniel prayed for the nations. He understood how prophecy affects politics and vice versa. He studied Scripture to understand how to pray. He meditated and sought prophetic understanding of how prophecy applied to his generation. He compared the biblical promise and timing with the date and conditions in which he lived (see Daniel 9:1–3).

- Daniel took the Scriptures as a mandate to pray for the prophecies to be fulfilled with the expectation that his prayers were part of causing those prophecies to come to pass. The destiny of all the nations is connected spiritually with the restoration of Israel. An understanding of the prophetic significance of events in the Middle East, therefore, should influence the prayers of the saints wherever they live in the world (see Dan. 9:2–3).
- Daniel prayed with humility and repentance – not primarily about his own sins but about the sins of his people. He repents on their behalf as he makes intercession for them (see Isa. 53) and stands in the gap (see Ezek. 22 and Dan. 9:4-6).
- Our prayers can affect the world because God commissions mighty angels to respond to our prayers. The connection between our prayers and the work of angels not only changes history but gives us prophetic revelation and insight into the plans and purposes of God (see Dan. 9:20–23).

Blessings to each of you as you continue your own personal journey as an effective watchman in the perilous days in which we live. May the Holy Spirit guide and direct your reading and praying of the Word of God. {eoa}

Dr. James W. Goll is the founder of God Encounters Ministries. He is an international bestselling author, a certified Life Language Coach, an adviser to leaders and ministries and a recording artist. James has traveled around the world ministering in more than 50 nations sharing the love of Jesus, imparting the power of intercession, prophetic ministry and life in the Spirit. He has recorded numerous classes with corresponding curriculum kits and is the author of more than 50 books, including The Seer, The Prophet, The Discerner, The Lost Art of Intercession and Praying with God's Heart. James is also the founder of GOLL Ideation LLC, where creativity, consulting and leadership training come together.

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No Matter What Comes, God C.A.R.E.S.

Have you ever felt like things were so difficult in your life that “no one cared” about what you were going through? I have.

But the truth is, you always have an advocate – because God .

You are never alone. And at His very core – God is good!

Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. Regardless of the terrifying storms of life surrounding you, it is vital to anchor your soul in Christ and keep your eyes fixed on Him.

The wind and waves of today may look frightening, but when you

fix your eyes on Christ, you only see His goodness and you can trust His words. "Take courage; it is I. Do not be afraid" (Matt. 14:27, NASB).

As you remember who God is and put your trust in Him, you can say with confidence like David in Psalm 27:1 (NASB): "The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom should I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; Whom should I dread?"

One of the best ways to shift your focus and see God's goodness in your life is by using the acronym, God .

God .

A pastor friend, Alex Seeley of The Belonging Co., a local church that I attend in the Nashville area, gave me permission to use her memorable acronym: .

Each letter stands for an aspect of seeking God's goodness for your life:

C – Cry out.

A – Appeal to His nature.

R – Remember what He has done in the past.

E – Enlarge God over your circumstances.

S – Sing.

C – Cry out. You don't have to deny the pain; it helps to cry out to God in the midst of it. You have to cry some tears in order to give God something to put into His special bottle: "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book" (Ps. 56:8, NLT).

I like to say it this way: Don't live a bottled-up life; give God something to bottle up. This is the first step on the path of recovery, and you will not be able to find hope if you omit it.

It is okay to cry out in absolute desperation. In fact, it is

preferable to cry out in desperation.

When you are at the end of your rope, you know you need God and that you cannot do enough on your own strength to make a difference. That's a perfect starting place and it's the best way to find out for yourself that God cares about you, personally.

A – Appeal to His nature. Tell yourself, tell the enemy and remind God of His divine nature – the attributes of His character – His goodness, His faithfulness, His lovingkindness.

Find particular verses in Scripture that help you recount His qualities. “Who is like You among the gods, Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders!” (Exod. 15:11, NASB).

R – Remember what He has done in the past. If you can't remember a single thing He has done for you in the past, or if you run out of ideas, simply resort to the Bible.

Recite some of God's mighty deeds from both the Old and New Testaments and let that prime the pump of your own memories. Recount how God sent the flood but preserved good Noah, his family and enough animals to repopulate the earth. Recount how Jesus Christ went about doing good – healing the blind and raising the dead. Recall how He died on the cross while we were yet sinners.

Then remember the time you didn't know how you were going to pay your rent but somehow God sent the money. Remember the time He made the sun shine in your eyes through the Venetian blinds to show you He cared. Remember what He has done for you personally.

E – Enlarge God over your circumstances. All of this will help you see how big God is. Magnify Him – in all senses of the word! Glorify Him and praise Him, making His bigness known to

yourself and others. "Magnify the Lord with me! Let's praise his name together!" (Ps. 34:3, NET).

You need to get the right perspective. Your tragedy or loss is not bigger than God. He's always bigger and better than any personal (or even global) problem you can come up with.

S – Sing! With all of that build-up, you may already be singing. But in case you aren't, let me urge you to open your mouth and let out a shout of praise – even before your circumstances change for the better. Look at this exhortation:

"Sing, O barren, You who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, You who have not labored with child! For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married woman,' says the Lord" (Isa. 54:1, NKJV, quoted in Galatians 4:27).

Your singing will change the spiritual climate around you so that authentic faith can arise. You may not feel happy, but you will be resolute. It will be a true sacrifice of praise.

Something about this response changes things and shakes them up. That's what it did literally for Paul and Silas when they were in prison in Philippi (Acts 16). They were singing God's praises in the middle of the night and an earthquake came. They got set free, and their worshipful steadfastness converted the jailer and his entire household.

I encourage you to go through this routine daily for a while. If you do, you will find it is good medicine for your soul. Hope will rise with the morning sun and joy won't be far behind.

Our God Reigns

No matter what is happening in the world, you can rest securely knowing that God sits on the throne and He is good.

He is King and you have a wonderful King! His goodness does

not change like a shifting shadow. His goodness remains steady and sure, whether in the best of times or in the worst of times.

Place your trust in God, not in today's circumstances.

God is good, period.

With such a wonderful King, you can find comfort knowing He cares for you. He is a good God.

Cry out to Him, remember who He is and rejoice! Praise your God, who so tenderly . for you!

Remember that God .

(This article is adapted from Chapter 10: "No Matter What Comes, God Is Good" in James W. Goll's book, *Tell Your Heart to Sing Again.*) {eoa}

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Why It is Imperative to Pray and Take a Stand for Israel

Nations are being weighed in the balance. These are tumultuous times. Much is at stake right now, and society is rapidly changing right before our eyes. It is extremely important to have God's perspective and to land on God's side in these critical times. I believe it is imperative that once again we take a good, hard look at what God's Word says about the land of Israel and His covenant promises. So, let's set our gaze clearly and surely concerning the apple of God's eye. Let's be grounded in the foundational understandings of why I pray and take a stand for Israel.

Israel Is Still the Apple of God's Eye

Pray and take a stand for Israel because Israel is still very close to God's heart. "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob [Israel] is the allotment of His inheritance . . . He led him about, He instructed him, He protected him like the pupil of His eye . . . He spread out His wings and took him; He lifted him on His pinions" (Deut. 32:9-11). If God says that Israel is the apple or pupil of His eye, then I want to pray with insight – with His sight. Do you want to be close to the heart of God? Then be close to the things, people and purposes that are close to His heart.

We Must Walk in Compassion

As you pray for Israel, be filled with compassion for Israel's condition. Psalm 102:13-14 says:

"You shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favor her, indeed, the appointed time has come. Your servants take pleasure in her stones and have pity on her dust." God wants to give His heart to us so that we can pray over Israel

with compassion. The time has come for us to receive His heart so that our prayers will go far beyond merely saying correct words and instead move on into the prayer of the heart – even to the prayer of tears.

God Commands Us to Give Him No Rest

Pray and take a stand for Israel because God wants to establish Jerusalem and give her praise on the earth. The prophet Isaiah declared: “I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night. You who remind the Lord, do not keep silent; give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a glory in the earth” (Isa. 62:6–7). Now we must understand something very clearly: This is not for our sake; it is for Zion’s sake! It is not about what is convenient; it is a priority!

God Desires to Work through Us for Israel’s Salvation

Pray for Israel so that Israel will be saved. God wants us to receive His heart so that we can pray with accuracy and discernment for the salvation of Israel. The apostle Paul said, “I have great sorrow and continual anguish in my heart . . . My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved” (Rom. 9:2; 10:1). Paul also declared, “For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brothers, my kinsmen by race, who are Israelites, to whom belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises” (Rom. 9:3-4). Paul was willing to be separated from Christ so that his brethren might know their Messiah.

God Commands Us to Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

Pray and take a stand for Israel because God wants to bless Jerusalem and her inhabitants with His peace and goodness. David’s exhortation in Psalm 122:6-7 must still be prayed and sung today: “May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls and security within your towers.” We must pray for

the *shalom* of God for the city of peace.

Israel's Acceptance of Jesus Will Create a Revival

Pray and act for Israel because the Jewish people's acceptance of the Messiah Jesus will lead to worldwide revival of unprecedented magnitude. Romans 11:15 says: "For if their [Israel's] rejection [of Christ] means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" Wow! Life from the dead! Israel's acceptance of the glorious Messiah will be used to catalyze the greatest spiritual awakening this planet has ever seen. The whole earth will be filled with the fruit of revival.

Jesus Linked His Second Coming with Israel Turning to Him

Pray and take a stand for Israel because the Second Coming of Christ is linked to Israel's response to Him. Jesus prophesied before His death, "For I tell you, you will not see Me until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'" (Matt. 23:39). Jesus linked His second coming to Israel's nation turning, or returning, to Him. As you hold God's appointments before Him as a watchman on the walls, you'll help to fulfill every plan and purpose on His strategic calendar – for Israel and the nations of the earth. So join me and thousands of other watchmen on the walls for such a time as this in our targeted prayer this month. Let us pray together for God's redemptive purposes to come forth for Israel and all of the Middle East. In Jesus' mighty name!
{eoa}

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5 Keys to a Life of God Encounters

By the grace of God, my life has been filled with “God encounters”—God taking me to mountaintops, leading me through the valleys and walking with me in the small moments, every step of every day.

And you can live a life filled with God encounters too.

Guiding people into encounters with God has been my passionate pursuit for many decades. During all this time I have seen proof repeatedly: “God encounters are for everyone!”

5 Keys to a Life of God Encounters

Initially, I thought I would keep it simple and highlight prayer, the presence of God and the prophetic.

But as I prayed more into this, I felt the Holy Spirit reveal

a couple more key components that are vital to emphasize.

So, the fourth ingredient is the necessity of perseverance. Do not quit!

Then finally, the person of God Himself. He is the goal of our lives.

1. Prayer: Developing intimacy with God.

One of my favorite passages in the New Testament is Ephesians 1:16-19 (TPT). In this passage, we find Paul, an apostle and spiritual father, launching a letter to the church at Ephesus.

“I constantly remember you in my prayers. I pray that the Father of glory, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, would impart to you the riches of the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of revelation to know him through your deepening intimacy with him. I pray that the light of God will illuminate the eyes of your imagination, flooding you with light, until you experience the full revelation of the hope of his calling—that is, the wealth of God’s glorious inheritances that he finds in us, his holy ones! I pray that you will continually experience the immeasurable greatness of God’s power made available to you through faith.”

We all have two sets of eyes: our two physical eyes and the eyes of our spirit. It is critical to have the eyes of your heart open at all times. Pray, then, in the name of the Lord that they will be opened. Call forth the spirit of revelation into your life.

The fast-paced, instant society of our day is diametrically opposed to the gentle, quiet spirit you need to be a person of revelation. The Holy Spirit is searching eagerly for those on whose quiet hearts He can write the revelatory words of God.

Any friendship goes through different stages in its development. The same is true of your friendship with God; you

move to progressively deeper and sweeter levels toward the goal of perfect union with Christ.

One of the glories of heaven will be the opportunity to spend an eternity getting to know the eternal love of our eternal God! In the meantime, you have the chance while on earth to become a friend of God.

2. Presence of God: When God draws near.

You cannot fully achieve true intimacy with God until you learn how to come before Him in worshipful adoration. An atmosphere of pure-hearted devotion is essential if you wish to experience deep, loving communion with your Lord.

David the psalmist wrote, "Here's the one thing I crave from Yahweh, the one thing I seek above all else: I want to live with him every moment in his house, beholding the marvelous beauty of Yahweh, filled with awe, delighting in his glory and grace. I want to contemplate in his temple" (Ps. 27:4).

In Psalm 46 the Lord calls on us to "Be still and realize that I am God" (v. 10).

This "realizing" goes far beyond mere informational knowledge. The Hebrew word *yada* is used for all types of knowledge, including the most intimate relationships. It is the same word used in the phrase "And Adam knew Eve his wife."

Knowing God means to be brought into vital, personal union with Jesus Christ our Lord. That's the kind of intimacy He seeks with you, but entering it requires cooperation on your part.

Pursue the divine author and His Word as a way of drawing near to the very presence of God!

3. The Prophetic: The voice of God in our lives.

If you draw near to God, you are going to hear Him speak to

you. John 10:29 states, "My sheep hear My voice, I know them, and they follow Me."

The first prophetic word I ever heard came out of my own mouth. It was in the fall of 1972 when I had just received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It happened one day when I was praying. A flow of words began to come out of my mouth. I said something like this:

"In the last week of the last days of Jesus' earthly ministry, He visited His Father's house. The zeal for the Lord of hosts came upon Him and He declared, 'My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.' He overturned the moneychangers' tables; He set free the caged ceremonial dove; healing occurred; and praise broke out among the children.

"In a similar manner, in the last week of the last days of Jesus' ministry by His Spirit, He will come to visit his Father's house. Once again, he will declare, 'My Father's house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations.' Cleansing shall come to God's house; the dove of God will be set free, never to be caged again. Healing gifts will spring forth suddenly, and great praise will arise from the children of God across the face of the earth."

The true message of Christ Jesus empowers and elevates all believers to the equal and supreme honor of knowing Him in a true, full and intimate relationship. He does not call you to a hierarchical organization where He only meets with elite leaders who then pass down His commands to lay people.

Instead, He calls you into a family where you become His child and He is your beloved, attentive Father. As a believer, you receive the opportunity to come and sit upon His lap and lean upon His heart and listen to His every word.

4. Perseverance: Character for the long haul.

You and I must heed the warnings of Jesus to keep moving forward and not look back. You don't want to live life looking in the rearview mirror. You need a good dose of raw obedience mingled with the fear of the Lord and an additional unpopular ingredient called old-fashioned perseverance.

"Jesus responded, 'Why do you keep looking back to your past and have second thoughts about following me? If you turn back, you are not fit for God's kingdom'" (Luke 9:62).

How do I keep committed, looking forward and not looking back when things get tough?

The more complex things appear to be, the simpler my approach becomes. I keep the eyes of my heart focused on the one. I do not veer away from the fear of the Lord. He still causes me to tremble.

There are days or even seasons that indelibly mark your life with pain or hardship.

How do you respond? How do you hang onto the God of promises when your perception of the promises of God seem to slip away or even evaporate? How do you live with a strong character and integrity even while walking through the valley of the shadow of death?

A lot of people ask me if I have a special key that enables me to carry on despite everything that's happened.

Here is my key, if it can be called that. By grace, I do not quit.

I have never stopped worshipping God. I run to Him with my pain. I forgive often. I have never stopped seeking counsel and input. I continue to be actively engaged in church life. I read my Bible. I do the everyday things like pray and praise. I have never stopped believing in miracles. I have chosen to love God no matter what. Quitting is not an option.

While I have wanted to quit many, many times, I haven't quit. I have pushed the pause button multiple times to reevaluate, calculate and realign myself.

God requires of you who put your hand to the plow to not look back. He calls you to persevere, continue in elementary faithfulness and never give up. Together, we press forward to the upward call in Christ Jesus.

5. Person: The testimony of Jesus.

Isn't the Bible breathtaking? Not one line is wasted. This is what you can expect every time you open your Bible. Jesus Himself will speak to you! He will reveal Himself to you!

The Bible is not dull or boring. How could it be? It is alive! It is a masterpiece written by a master Creator for the specific purpose of speaking to you, so you can know Him personally both now and to the very end of your earthly race.

No matter where you are reading in the Bible, you should expect to meet Jesus through what you read. This is what keeps you coming back for more.

One of the goals of my life is that when I leave the room, the one who came with me remains. It is not as much about me leaving a fortune or great impact of accolades. Oh, how I desire to cast a shadow of the Almighty. This really is all about receiving and releasing the revelation of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Wouldn't you agree?

"At this I fell facedown at the angel's feet to worship him, but he stopped me and said, "Don't do this! For I am only a fellow servant with you and one of your brothers who clings to what Jesus testifies. Worship God. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10).

In your quest for God encounters, make sure your goal is the author of the God encounters Himself. {eoa}

Why You Should Pray for God's Wisdom Ways

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52, NKJV).

Wisdom is one of the primary qualities of God's Holy Spirit—in Isaiah 11:1-3, the spirit of wisdom is listed as one of the seven Spirits of God. He is wisdom personified: “God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself” (1 Cor. 1:30, NLT). I would say wisdom is even more vital to prophetic people than the divine revelation they receive because only through God-sent wisdom can they know how to handle the word of the Lord in the right way.

What Is Wisdom?

God values wisdom so much that altogether the words “wisdom” or “wise” are used more than 456 times in the Bible. Clearly, wisdom is a valuable commodity! Yet do we truly understand what wisdom is? Or do we simply presume to know? In the New Testament, the wise apostle James provides clarity regarding the nature of God's wisdom:

“The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure and full of quiet gentleness. Then it is peace-loving and courteous. It allows discussion and is willing to yield to others; it is full of mercy and good deeds. It is wholehearted and straightforward and sincere” (James 3:17, TLB).

Synonyms for the word “wisdom” help flesh out its meaning. They include: understanding, knowledge, good sense, insight, perception, astuteness, acumen, prudence, sagacity, good judgment and more. I want and need multiplied quantities of

every one of those qualities. How about you?

In every generation, some believers exemplify wisdom to a high degree. In everything they say and do, you can recognize the mind and heart of God. Their sterling character shines beautifully. They care about others more than themselves. They humbly seek God before they give advice or take action. Like anybody, they can veer off the narrow way (as Solomon did), but the good fruit of their lives far outweighs the bad.

How Do We Obtain Wisdom?

How can we best lay hold of God's wisdom? We already know we must surrender ourselves to His lordship and lean on Him continually, but does that guarantee that His wisdom will flow into our lives? What should we expect? How can we recognize God's wisdom when it comes?

How does His wisdom come to us? Is it a sovereign gift from God? Is it a spiritual presence? Is our personal wisdom assembled from extensive reading and studying? Or does it come mostly from experience—spending years in the “school of hard knocks”?

There is no one answer because wisdom comes in all of the manners listed above. We can see this when we search for the word “wisdom” in Scripture. Consider the following:

Wisdom as a gift. “For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:8, NKJV).

Wisdom as a spirit. “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of the knowledge and the fear of the Lord” (Isa. 11:2, NIV).

Wisdom from studying. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly

dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, KJV).

Wisdom arising from life experience. "For the righteous falls seven times, and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity" (Prov. 24:16, ESV).

"Even fools are thought wise when they keep silent; with their mouths shut, they seem intelligent" (Prov. 17:28, NLT).

Since our dear Lord Jesus "increased" and grew in wisdom, stature and favor with God (see Luke 2:52), then we should expect to do so as well. I think that it is remarkable that Jesus, who was God in the flesh, kept increasing in His wisdom throughout His life on earth.

Our increase in wisdom will not happen automatically, though. Like me, you surely have met people you knew many years before, whom you have been dismayed to see that they never matured much at all. They still act like teenagers who are "wet behind the ears," even though they may have a diploma, a career, a family and a nice car. They don't even realize they lack the mature wisdom their years could have won for them.

Scripture says that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9:10); humble surrender to God must be the first step. We need all the wisdom we can get, and we always need more wisdom as long as we are alive on this earth. The apostle James clearly stated that we must ask for more wisdom—and that if you do, God will grant it to you: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5, NKJV). Even King Solomon, who was famous for his unsurpassed wisdom, asked God for it:

"So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?" It was pleasing in the sight of the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing. God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked

for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice, behold, I have done according to your words. Behold, I have given you a wise and discerning heart, so that there has been no one like you before you, nor shall one like you arise after you" (1 Kings 3:9-12).

Wisdom Comes by Prayer

How should we make our requests to God for wisdom? Well, in the simplest of terms, we must admit, *"God, I lack wisdom."* And then we acknowledge, *"But You have a limitless supply of wisdom, and You have shown Your desire to share it with the people You have created. You have come to us as Jesus, who is wisdom itself. I ask You to release Your wisdom to me concerning the problem in front of me."* And then expect God's wisdom to rise up in you.

Ask with complete faith that God wants to answer your prayer, and He will. That is what the apostle James wrote:

"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind" (James 1:5-6).

Wisdom is invaluable for any believer alongside any of the gifts of the Spirit. As you already know, we need all the wisdom we can get, particularly when we are handling a word of revelation and increasing pressure as the end times unfold. Since my youth, my prayer for wisdom has been one of the three guiding prayers for my life. Many of you know this.

These are my three guiding prayers since childhood:

me a heart of purity to keep me from the evil way.

2. Give me the Spirit of counsel like you did to Joseph for those in authority.

3. Give me wisdom beyond my years to solve complex problems like Solomon.

I have prayed various versions of these three prayers since my preteen years and continue to do so to this day.

Closing Word of Wisdom

Do not let your quest for wisdom become an excuse for perfectionism to keep you in the seat of the observer. Life and ministry do not work that way. If perfection is your goal, you will never get married, start that new career or take that leap of faith. If you mistake wisdom with a fear of stepping out, then you will be an observer and scoffer to the moves of God.

Wisdom comes by jumping in the middle of life. Wisdom comes from participating. Wisdom comes from stepping out of the boat and reaching out to Jesus. Never let your quest for wisdom become misplaced fear. Let your wisdom always be filled with faith that leads you into an adventure with the Holy Spirit. That's the Jesus I know.

This article originally appeared at . {eoa}

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Identifying and Praying Into Our Core Values

The Lord spoke to me about my core values more than 40 years ago when I was a young pastor, and what I learned then has stuck with me. At the time, I was not thinking 40 or 50 or even 100 years into the future; I was just thinking about the week ahead and my next Sunday sermon.

Yet out of the blue, this sentence occurred to me, and I knew it was from God: “Your end-time worldview will determine your lifestyle.”

The Lord wasn't delineating to me what my end-time worldview should be. He was simply pointing out that my day-to-day decisions, taken together, would create my style of life. Inevitably, these decisions would be based on my faith.

How would my core values be affected by what I thought about Christ's return? How would I interpret the Scriptures? Would I view myself as helping to bring God's kingdom to earth? What might be my contribution to this purpose? What kind of education would I acquire in relation to it?

Over time, my worldview and my approach to everything in life has turned out to align with these four core biblical values:

1. God is good, all the time.
2. Nothing is impossible with God.
3. Everything that needed to be accomplished was completed at Calvary.
4. As ambassadors of Christ, we carry His delegated, regal

authority.

Again, 40 years have gone by since the Lord first spoke to me about core values, and as it has turned out, I have given my life to raising up a people who are so filled with the Holy Spirit that His light shining through them can replace the darkness. I have endeavored to understand God's kingdom and, like the sons of Issachar, to discern the times and the seasons in order to teach people how to live wisely (see 1 Chron. 12:32).

I may not have succeeded in every respect, but I aim to finish as well as I can. I want to live in and share an authentic culture of wisdom and faith until the day God calls me home.

Core Values Shape Attitudes and Expectations

Our enemy would like to deflect us from the purposes of God by inserting ungodly beliefs into our minds, but the Spirit helps us to uncover those negative strongholds, and with His help we can replace them with positive attitudes and applications. For example, when I discover that I am being plagued by the fear that God has passed me by, giving good things to other people but not to me, I call up the truth that God is good, all the time.

I allow my biblical core values to shape my attitudes and expectations. Otherwise, I will view my memories of past experiences, my present tribulations and my uncertain future through a dark lens, and my faith will falter. But I have learned to not let fear have the final word.

I lay hold of this truth: we do not fight toward victory—we fight from victory. Jesus has already won the battle. He has overcome the world. Thus, when evil washes over me and I am tempted to despair, I can discern the desperate efforts of the devil to persuade me that Jesus' victory is not true.

Additional Lessons Along the Way

I also learn to embrace the humbling circumstances in which I find myself. I have adopted a new attitude about humility. The world tells me that I should be powerful, capable, strong, respected—while keeping up a front of false modesty so nobody will criticize me.

But Jesus tells me that true humility paves the way to His kind of success. I have discovered through experience that false humility will deny my true destiny, while true humility will take me to it. Our boasting should be in what Christ has already accomplished, not in our human ability to bring His earthly rule and reign to pass.

The only way you and I can do any good on this earth and help bring in God's kingdom is to let His light shine through our broken, humble selves. Jesus the Messiah is the light of the world. We are not supposed to merely gaze on Him and reflect His glory; rather, His glory is supposed to burst out of us. We do not deny the darkness, but we do deny its finality. As Isaiah 60:1 encourages, we arise and let His light shine through us.

Our theme verse for targeted prayer this month comes from Colossians 1:27 (NIV), "To them [the Lord's people] God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Let us endeavor to pray into and create a healthy kingdom culture where all believers can shine their light together and thus overwhelm the kingdom of darkness, including every religious and political spirit, every spirit of pride, the antichrist spirit and anything else that the enemy decides to throw in our faces.

Let's identify our kingdom core values, pray into them and walk them out! Let's displace darkness by walking in the opposite Spirit and release Christ in us, the hope of glory!

This article originally appeared at . {eoa}

Revelation's Ultimate Purpose: Presenting Jesus to the World

The ultimate purpose of discerning revelation is presenting Jesus to the world. In other words, we let God's Word become flesh in us so that others can experience Him.

One of joys in my life is the people I have the honor of working with. One of them is Jeffrey Thompson, the project manager for my ministry, God Encounters Ministries. Here, he tells about a revelatory experience he had with the Lord that expresses revelation's ultimate purpose:

One day not long ago, I was given the opportunity to preach at the church where I serve part-time on the pastoral staff. After I brought the message at the worship service, I felt really good about it. It seemed to have been inspired both in content and delivery. So, I asked the Lord, "Lord, have You called me to preach?"

The Lord responded to me immediately in my spirit, saying, "No, I've called you to incarnate."

He was realigning my priorities, reminding me that the endgame isn't just the preaching or teaching or whatever—the endgame is the relationship with Jesus Christ, and the more completely I walk with Him, the more I incarnate Him. By "incarnate," I mean He takes on flesh in me. I am called to bring His love and wisdom and peace and hope into the room with me so that people can see Him.

That says it well. Discerning—hearing, confirming and acting on prophetic revelation—is really about incarnation.

Not only is it about the historical incarnation of God the Son as a Jewish man named Jesus over 2,000 years ago, but also about Jesus' incarnation in each of His followers, in you and in me.

Each one of us has been called to incarnate Him.

Presenting Jesus to the World: Incarnational Christianity

All of this is to say one thing: The whole purpose of prophetic revelation and, therefore, the purpose of the discernment of revelation is incarnational—presenting Jesus to the world. This is the reason for our interactive hearing and communing with God in all of its dimensions.

Together with all of those who walk with Jesus, we carry His message to the world.

As the apostle John was recording the magnificent revelation he received when he was on the Isle of Patmos, he wrote:

“I fell at [the angel's] feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brothers and sisters who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10).

For us as discerners, the key phrase here is “your brothers and sisters who hold the testimony of Jesus.”

If our receiving revelation does not lead others into a greater awareness of who Christ Jesus is, and if it does not lead us into a more passionate pursuit of Him, then something is askew.

Many people have historical information and doctrinal knowledge about Jesus, but we must have a personal revelation

of Him.

We cannot find this without the help of His Holy Spirit, because it takes God to know God. One of the Holy Spirit's roles is to make Jesus real to us, to make us able to know Him and follow Him.

As we know Him, we make Him known—through our words and our lifestyle. We incarnate Him, carrying His testimony far and wide.

So when we talk about receiving and releasing prophetic revelation, we are not primarily referring to predicting the future, but rather to displaying the message and person of Jesus to the world around us.

This is something that you and I can do. With the Holy Spirit helping us, we can “show and tell” the world that Jesus is Lord and Messiah. (See Matt. 16:13-17, 1 Cor. 12:3.)

True prophetic revelation is powerful; it penetrates hardened hearts and unbelief.

Think about how it worked in the New Testament. When Jesus told Nathanael that He had seen him under the fig tree, Nathanael and others believed that Jesus was the Messiah. (See John 1:43-51.)

After Jesus revealed to the Samaritan woman at the well “everything she ever did,” and she told the people of her town about it, many of the townspeople came to believe in Him as the Son of God. (See John 4:7-26.)

This is the revelation lifestyle we are meant to be walking in today. Living a life of revelation can change people's lives. And as you and I walk with Jesus, we step into the same powerful, revelatory stream that He walked in.

Revelatory Encounters with Jesus Today

A few years ago, I went to Indonesia to minister at a conference with Bill Johnson, Ché Ahn and Heidi Baker. Indonesia, made up of thousands of islands in Southeast Asia, is the largest Muslim-populated nation in the world.

For safety, I was given a personal bodyguard who went everywhere with me. He was a dedicated Muslim who had never been in a church meeting in his life. He also had never been taught the truth about Jesus as Savior and Lord, though his religion had taught him to believe that Jesus was one of the prophets.

As I was at the podium speaking in one of the sessions, my bodyguard stood nearby. Everything I taught at the conference was being translated into the Indonesian language, so he was able to understand it.

And during my message, unbeknownst to me, he had a revelatory encounter with God. I found out about it the next day right before I got up to speak again. People were taking turns sharing testimonies, and I was sitting in the first row with some friends who were translating for me. Much to my surprise, my Muslim bodyguard went up front to testify.

He started off by stating, "Listen to Prophet James Goll." I do not know if anybody told him to call me that, but it did make me think of the Scripture passage that says if you receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, you'll receive a prophet's reward.

Then he went on to say, "I am a Muslim, and while I was serving Prophet James Goll, I had a vision. Light and glory came, and many angels appeared to me." People applauded. He was finished, so I got up to speak.

While I was giving my message, this man had a second vision, a panoramic one, while his eyes were open, and he was just standing there as my bodyguard. This time, Jesus—along with His disciples— appeared to him, and Jesus spoke to him,

saying, "Would you be one of My disciples?" On the spot, pierced by the revelation, this man gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I heard about this later, I was amazed. I have never known of anyone having a vision of Jesus with all His disciples.

This powerful encounter had long-lasting results. The man was a husband and father, and eventually his whole family gave their lives to Jesus. On a later trip to Indonesia, I was told that they had all become part of a local church and been water-baptized. This was God moving in signs and wonders, praise the Lord!

When you and I—and others—carry the Spirit of God into a dark place, the glory of His light sweeps away all obstacles and overcomes the darkness. Amazing things can happen, whether or not you expect them to. Revelatory gifts are like anti-tank missiles. They shatter the enemy's schemes, expose darkness, and release freedom to captives.

These truths are not for an elite group of upper-class Christians. No! What I have shared with you from the depths of my heart is meant for every believer.

The only requirement is hunger. Are you hungry for more of the Lord? You can count on the truth of this saying: "The depth of your hunger is the length of your reach to God."

I don't know about you, but I want to do more than hear a word from God. I want to become that word.

That is revelation's ultimate purpose—for the Word to become flesh and to present Jesus to the world.

This article is adapted from Chapter 12: "Revelation's Ultimate Purpose: The Word Becomes Flesh" in The Discerner by James W. Goll. {eoa}

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Prophet: Learning to Listen With Discernment

Learning to listen with discernment means that you begin to recognize the voice of God so well that other voices sound unfamiliar.

In John 10:5a, Jesus told his followers, “Yet they will never follow a stranger.” This statement needs to become a reality in your life. It takes practice and requires that you learn well the lessons in listening with discernment offered to all of us by the Holy Spirit.

Don't be so overly zealous, that instead of making the time to take driver's training classes, you quickly get into the fastest car you can find and go off to the races.

Some, sad to say, end up in a ditch or become a casualty of driving without a license! But you can avoid the ditches.

First, get your permit while being mentored by others, and then graduate to driving alone. Where hearing God is concerned, driver's education consists of discernment lessons.

The Need for Discerning of Spirits

The gift of discerning of spirits, which is listed in the New Testament as one of the gifts of the Spirit, is desperately needed in today's church culture. This gift helps you distinguish what motivates spiritual activity. It helps you see through the gray areas and differentiate light from darkness.

The following are some examples of the gift of discerning of spirits in operation:

– Acts 16:16-18, where Paul discerned that the power of a certain slave girl was in fact a demonic spirit.

– Acts 13:8-11, where Paul discerned that Elymas the magician was demonically energized in his attempt to oppose the presentation of the gospel.

– Acts 14:8-10, where again Paul discerned (“saw”) that a man had faith to be healed.

– When a person is able to discern whether or not a problem in someone's life is demonic or merely the consequence of other emotional and psychological factors, or perhaps a complex combination of both.

– When people with this gift are often able to detect or discern the presence of demonic spirits in a room or some such location.

– In Acts 8:20-24, Peter was said to “see” (not physically, but to perceive or sense) that Simon Magus was filled with bitterness and iniquity.

– It would seem that Jesus exercised something along the lines of this gift when he looked at Nathanael and described him as a man “in which is no guile” (John 1:47). In John 2:25 it is said that Jesus “knew what was in man.”

Bottom line: This gift helps you to see below the bottom line!

The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

When the outward appearance of a wolf is disguised, the human eye cannot immediately discern the wolf. However, the sheepdog will not be deceived, even by the sheep's clothing.

He is not deceived because he does not judge by his eyesight but by his sense of smell. The wolf may look like a sheep, but he still smells like a wolf.

In Scripture, discernment is like a sense of smell, acting independently of the natural eyesight.

Isaiah the prophet, foreseeing the ministry of Jesus as the Messiah, the anointed one, declares that "the spirit of the Lord ... shall make him of quick understanding [literally, quick of scent] in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears" (Isa. 11:2-3, KJV).

Those to whom God commits the care of His sheep must likewise, through the Holy Spirit, be quick of scent.

Wisely Judging Revelation

What would you think if you had a spiritual experience that made your hair stand on end? Would you write it off as absolutely satanic or crazy because it didn't fit into your theological grid?

Consider some of the experiences of Daniel, Isaiah or Ezekiel recorded in the Old Testament.

Daniel lay weary for days because of the impact of a supernatural vision.

Isaiah had his lips seared by a burning coal.

Ezekiel was forced to lie on his side for 390 days straight.

Then there's Zechariah, Paul and John, the beloved disciple.

An angel strikes Zechariah dumb; Paul is blinded; and John sees visions of such magnitude that the entire book of Revelation is inadequate to record them.

We need the gift of discernment, don't we?

Most of us in the Western world, if confronted with such events, would tend to chalk them up to psychological disturbances or the devil.

Entire segments of the body of Christ have written off hearing from the Lord because of fears about being deceived and led astray.

It's true that such experiences can come from the supernatural power of the enemy, from the human mind or from God Himself. Yet God wants us to recognize His voice, and our master is very capable of preserving us from harm and deception.

We can trust our Father. If we ask Him for the things of the Holy Spirit in the name of Christ, we will get the real things, not counterfeits. Two of His best gifts are wisdom and discernment. We need to stick close to Jesus and ask God to enable us to grow in them!

9 Scriptural Tests for Receiving Divine Revelation

The only way we can accurately and safely approach interpreting the motivation behind revelatory activity of any kind is to ask God for the spirit of wisdom and understanding. God still speaks today through many different avenues, including visions, dreams, His inner voice, His external audible voice, His creation and so forth.

Yet our most important source of revelation is the canon of Scripture. Since the Bible is our absolute standard against which we must test spiritual experiences, let's look at nine scriptural tests.

To be assured of receiving accurate and valid revelation, we

can apply the following list of nine scriptural tests.

1. Does the revelation edify, exhort or console? (See 1 Cor. 14:3, 26.)
2. Is it in agreement with God's Word? (See 2 Tim. 3:16.)
3. Does it exalt Jesus Christ? (See John 16:14 and Rev. 19:10.)
4. Does it have good fruit? (See Matt. 7:15-16, Gal. 5:22-23 and Eph. 5:9.)
5. If it predicts a future event, does it come to pass? (See Deut. 18:22.)
6. Does the revelatory turn people toward God or away from Him? (See Deut. 13:1-5.)
7. Does it produce liberty or bondage? (See Rom. 8:15, 1 Cor. 14:33 and 2 Tim. 1:7.)
8. Does it produce life or death? "For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." (See 2 Cor. 3:6, MEV.)
9. Does the Holy Spirit bear witness that it is true? (See 1 John 2:27 and John 16:13.)

May God give us the ability to walk in the grace of discerning His voice from all the "voices of strangers." May you experience the fullness of the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (see Eph. 1:17-19).

Let's pause to lift a prayer for listening with discernment:

Father God, Your Word tells me to not despise prophesying, to test all things and to hold fast to what is good. Teach me to discern Your voice. I lift up Your Word as my standard. Help me to be a wise steward of Your grace, dear Lord. Teach me to discern good from evil. Grant me a listening heart filled with wisdom and discernment. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen. {eoa}

For the original article, please visit . {eoa}

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4 Characteristics of Authentic Prophetic People

A river without banks is just runoff water. The *charismata*, Holy Spirit gifts, without character are a raft heading into swampy waters.

But when character is shaped in the image of Christ Jesus, then the presence, power and authority of the Holy Spirit have an effective course through which to be channeled.

4 Characteristics of Authentic Prophetic People

Here are four aspects of prophetic people who continuously pursue an intimate and godly walk with Christ:

1. **They are people of genuine faith.** Abraham was captivated by God with a vision and purpose. But Hebrews 11:8–10 indicates that he stepped out, “not knowing where he was going.” With that thought in mind, does he fit the image of a prophetic person of faith?

Abraham was looking for something—actually, for someone. Like all authentic prophetic pilgrims who came after him, he

maintained his gaze upward. He kept looking for the city whose builder and architect was God.

With this set of lenses, you might see your circumstances differently and take courage. You can qualify to be an authentic prophetic person—a man or woman of genuine faith.

- 2. They are pioneers taking on new territory.** Prophetic people are those who go before and open the way for others. They are called pioneers, forerunners or “breakers” in the Spirit. They pay the price, often as intercessors, plowing up fallow ground so that others can follow in their trail as sowers, planters, waterers and eventually reapers. Before there is a breakthrough, there must always come a “breaker.”

Truly, they are pioneers. They love the task of plowing new territory, but they cannot wait till the next round of gifted laborers appears, relieving them of their temporary responsibilities. Fresh grace seems to appear as a glint in their eyes over a new assignment revealed. These prophetic pioneers are paying the price as groundbreakers.

Know this for sure—if you are going to be a prophetic person, sooner or later you will be used with a plow in your hand.

- 3. They are messengers with a clear word.** Prophetic people carry a living word of not being conformed to this world, and they wield this message masterfully like a sharp, two-edged sword. Messengers carry a word with them. Their job is to be mouthpieces on behalf of another. Anna’s prophetic message, as recorded in Luke 2:38 (NASB 1977), was simple: she “continued to speak of [Jesus].” He is our message!

True messengers speak and live the message of the cross. Ultimately the cross must be our passion (1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2). We must preach Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead. That goes against the grain in a godless society. But there is

no deeper life message than the simplicity and centrality of the cross.

The power of God rests not on the wisdom, articulation and education of men and women, but on the foolishness of the preaching of the cross. We are to be people with a message. Is it possible that you could qualify for such a simple yet profound task?

4. **They are members of a servant community.** The body of Christ is to be a people relationally knit together. They are members of a servant community. We are not called to be lone rangers. Nor are there supposed to be a few elite, awesome superstars in the church. We are *all* called to walk in the anointing of a word of knowledge or wisdom, in His character and in His power. We are called to do it together.

When you study the armor of God in Ephesians, you will see that one area of your body is not protected: your hind side. Somebody else covers it for you.

If you are marching in an army, somebody is striding in front of you and someone behind you, watching your heels. In a sense, then, part of your armor is people who walk with you. That means *you* are part of the armor for someone else, too! That is what it means to be part of a servant community of believers.

Cultivating Character: Fruit That Is Grown

Have you ever noticed how many excruciating lessons there are to learn in character development? It's so good to remember that *God does not only want us to give a message; He wants us to become a living word.* Because the revelatory-gifted person is extra-sensitive, he or she must give the area of character development special attention.

Growing in the prophetic—hearing God's voice, receiving

visions, knowing His heart and so on—is extremely simple. At times we overly complicate this scene. It is a relational issue. It is not hiding, but relating.

Here are some keys I have been learning over the past 45-plus years of ministry in cultivating God's presence in my life. These seven helpful points have been milestones along my own journey of cultivating intimacy and growing in character to carry the gift:

- Rest around the ark of God's presence.
- Love mercy.
- Pray in the Holy Spirit.
- Inquire of the Lord. Ask questions. Learn to hold a secret like a friend.
- Love the anointing.
- Risk! Yes, roll the dice.
- Prayer of genuine heart.

Lord Jesus, I desire to be a person of genuine faith—a pioneer taking new territory, declaring the word of the Lord with clarity, love and a servant's heart. My heart wanders, and I want to go my own way. Help me to stay close to You and grow in strength of character. My goal is to grow in the fullness of the likeness Christ expressed in both godly character and resurrection power. I want to be like You, Jesus. You are beautiful. Amen and Amen! {eoa}

For the original article, visit .

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