

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

A STUDY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

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PART 11: THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

PROPHECY

The Old Testament prophets delivered messages from God to Israel, such as warnings of judgment and promised restoration to guide the Hebrews; there were also references to the Messiah.

The New Testament is centered on Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of prophecy, the destruction of Jerusalem, and what is going to happen in the end times in regards to the Antichrist and his control system.

When Jesus established the church on the day of Pentecost, it was a ministry to everyone on earth. There was a need for prophets to address the growing church which would operate on every continent and the many islands. Prophecy is the sixth gift of the Holy Spirit conferred upon Christians.

*“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.”*
(1 Corinthians 12:10)

Operating in this gift of the Holy Spirit – or any other for that matter – is exciting because it means you are in God’s will and He is choosing to use you for something particular. It is wonderful knowing that the path you’re on is sanctioned by God and receiving His blessing in the form of one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

THE EARLY CHURCH

Jesus visited the temple in Jerusalem and the disciples were impressed by the temple and its many buildings on the temple ground encompassing 36 acres. The God-man stated that the magnificent buildings – including the temple – would be destroyed.

“And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. (Matthew 24:1-2)

When questioned about the timeline, the Son of God did not provide any specifics, but described the conditions that would exist in the future. The Christians in Jerusalem took note of a key part of the prophecy. Namely, when a pagan Gentile leader stood on the temple ground, it was time to flee into the mountains.



When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day.” (Matthew 24:15-20)

Some 33 years later, the Jews rebelled against the Roman occupational government and drove out the Romans from Judea. But in the winter of 69/70, Titus entered Judea, captured Jerusalem, and brutally put down the rebellion against Rome.

It is estimated that the Christians in Jerusalem and outlying areas numbered about 25,000. The prophecy of Jesus had been recorded, and when the Roman army started to approach Jerusalem, the Christians fled into the mountains around Jerusalem. They heeded the words of Jesus and none were slaughtered by the Romans.

JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Solomon Grayzel (1896–1980) was a prominent Jewish historian, rabbi, and an author who was best known for his work on Jewish history and the contentious relationship between Jews and the early church. His writings reflected his commitment to Jewish identity and theology and that necessitated rejecting Jesus as the Messiah and there was no attempt at neutrality in his portrayal of the early church as in the following quote about the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

During the rebellion the Christians, who had till then used Jerusalem as their center of activity, moved out of the city to a small town on the other side of the Jordan. The group was so small and insignificant, that the Jews disregarded this unpatriotic action.

But when the Temple lay in ruins and the Jewish nation was expected to disappear, the Christians intensified their propaganda. They told all prospective converts that the destruction of the Temple was proof that God had abandoned the Jews, that He no longer wanted a Temple, and that they, who believed in Jesus as the Messiah, were the only true Jews. In other words, the Christians were able to point to the Temple ruins and say: “We expected this, and it is as it should be.”¹

Grayzel tried to downplay the number of Christian Jews in Jerusalem, but at the same time, he inadvertently acknowledged the prophecy of Jesus that led them to leaving the city with the arrival of Titus’ army.

¹ Grayzel, Solomon: A HISTORY OF THE JEWS, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947, p.178

THE BOOK OF ACTS

Seleucus I Nicator, a general of Alexander the Great and founder of the Seleucid Empire, established Antioch on the Orontes River as part of a series of cities meant to consolidate Greek power and culture across his territory. It was one of the most important cities of the Hellenistic world, and later for the Roman Empire, because of its closeness to the Mediterranean coast and the Orontes River made the city ideal for trade.

Antioch became the capital of the Roman province of Syria after Pompey annexed the region in 64 B.C. It was a center of commerce and ranked third in size after Rome and Alexandria with an estimated population of 250,000 to 600,000 at its peak. There was a sizable Jewish population at Antioch, some of whom had accepted Jesus as the Messiah. This thriving church eventually replaced the one at Jerusalem when the Romans besieged and destroyed the city and temple in A.D. 70.



The city of Antioch along the Orontes River with Mount Silpius in the background.

There were a number of prophets operating in the early church. One of them was Agabus and he traveled with some other prophets from Jerusalem to visit the church at Antioch.

He received a message from the Holy Spirit in A.D. 44 about a great famine that would affect the Roman Empire. This prophecy was fulfilled during the reign of Claudius Caesar one to two years later. The famine was so severe in Judah that Christians in Antioch sent aid with Barnabas and Paul.

“And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be

great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.” (Acts 11:27-30)

The Book of Acts makes it clear that prophecy was part of the early church and the Christians relied upon prophets to provide warnings and direction about the future.

“Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.” (Acts 13:1)

There were women on whom the Holy Spirit also imparted the gift of prophesy. Philip the evangelist had four daughters who served as prophetesses.

“And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.” (Acts 21:8-9)

AGABUS WAS FAMOUS

While the apostle Paul stayed at the home of Philip, Agabus visited the coastal town of Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea. Upon his arrival to the home of Philip, he took the belt of Paul and prophesied what would happen if the apostle went to Jerusalem. Even though Paul knew Agabus was a prophet from his time in Antioch, he still rejected the message from God.

“And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.” (Acts 21:10-14)

MODERN DAY PROPHECIES

I read about the Armenian massacre in the early 1970s and heard an abbreviated version of the story from Demos Shakarian, the founder of the Full Gospel Business Men's International Fellowship. I found a written copy posted online by a Christian.

Efim Gerasemovich Klubnikin was a prophet of no small repute. God used him to save an entire generation of Armenian and Russian Christians. Very little is said or written about this Russian and I view him as an unsung hero.

He was born on December 17, 1842 in Tambov, Tambov Oblast, Russia. Efim was the son of Gerasim Karpovich Klubnikin and Anya Eonovna (Novikoff) Klubnikin. He was the third of ten children made up of five boys and five girls. His father along with many others was ordered out of the Russian Empire by the Czar who considered their charismatic form of Christianity an embarrassment to his kingdom.

So, two years before Efim was born, his Spirit-filled parents migrated by imperial edict into Armenia with other Pentecostals, who soon began to exert influence in the new country.

From the age of eight and even younger, Efim Klubnikin gave himself over to prolonged prayer and fasting. These vigils could last up to eight days. This schedule was kept up until sometime in 1852, when he was about 11 years old.

He received his first vision after one such vigil. Efim was illiterate, yet as he prayed, God spoke and dropped a large sheet from heaven. The little boy was asked to go to his parents and ask for a pen and paper to write out the marks and characters on the heavenly sheet.

Efim came to his bemused parents with this weird demand and they obliged his request. Hours later the little boy emerged from the prayer closet with the paper and well-written instructions in perfect Russian. He assured his questioning parents that God had given him a vision of a beautiful handwriting on a sheet that came out from heaven.

Afterwards, the Lord warned him that wars, devastation, and great persecution was coming. He warned that Christians in Armenia and Russia must flee. Nevertheless, God would send an angel to accompany and preserve them.

Those were tall and eerie words coming from an eleven-year-old who had not eaten nor slept for seven full days! His equally illiterate parents decided to give the mysterious looking note to someone who could read to see if it meant anything. They weren't surprised to discover the note contained the prophecy exactly as Efim had told them, but there was more to it.

The gentleman who read the note was perplexed to see a map drawn among the instructions. God stated the Pentecostals must flee, but not to any neighboring town. It was far away in the United States, specifically to Los Angeles! It was an imponderable mystery.

Many thought that Efim had secretly taught himself geography and writing and was trying to play smart. Others mocking said, "He's just hallucinating! What do you think would happen to a boy of eleven going so long without food or sleep? Lunacy!" But these were not the writings of a lunatic. The village of Kara Kala was never the same again and Efim Klubnikin became its most famous citizen. He was dubbed the "Boy Prophet," a tag he carried into his 70s and died with in Los Angeles in 1916.

God said He would provide three signs to confirm when the faithful must flee to America.

1. There shall be spontaneous vigils of prayers and praise.
2. There shall be a very bright light that will flash across the sky in the night illuminating it greatly.
3. People shall start praying with these words specifically "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!"

The three signs were fulfilled almost five decades later.

- ❖ People began to gather spontaneously in several places to pray and call out to God nightly.
- ❖ Then a comet flashed through the sky during the night. Its light was so bright that people could see ants climbing from its light.
- ❖ Then certain groups began to shout soon after night after night about the bridegroom coming.

God confirmed to Efim sometime in 1902 that the wait was over. It was time to move or perish. Thousands fled from Armenia and Russia amidst jeers from mockers.

Efim was among the first to flee as did Demos Shakarian's family. The Turks came to Armenia in 1914 and massacred millions in an unprecedented genocide. Those who heeded God's warning were safe. The people in the village of Kara Kala who stayed behind and refused to believe the prophetic word were exterminated.

Shortly after his first vision, Efim received a second vision that was even more mysterious. It was another sheet full of Russian characters containing further instructions for a people who would be alive in the future. God told him to seal the prophecy and put it in an envelope.

He was told that long after he has died, God would raise another prophet like him whose duty it would be to open the sealed envelope and read the prophecy. Anyone who tried to do this besides the one sent by God would die mysteriously.

Since his death in 1916, two presumptuous prophets tried to read the message and died mysteriously before they could do so. The sealed envelope is with Efim's descendants waiting for the prophet whom God will send.²

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The Armenian genocide was perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire. It was a time of unimaginable horror that officially started on April 24, 1915 when hundreds of Armenian intellectuals and leaders from Constantinople were arrested and deported. The Ottoman army attacked Armenians in the province of Anatolia and Armenia. Villages were surrounded, people were forced into their homes, and then the building was set on fire. Anyone trying to escape the fire was shot.

The larger cities were cleansed of Armenians and marched into the Syrian desert. They were stripped of food and water and forced to march until they died. In other places Armenians were rounded up, forced into the mass graves, and slaughtered with rifle and/or machine gun fire. Others were sent to concentration camps where they starved to death. When the killing halted in 1917, it is estimated that two million Armenians were murdered by the Ottoman government.

PROPHETIC RESCUE

It is estimated there are some 300,000 descendants of the Armenians in California who fled the Ottoman Empire in the late 1890s. Two of the most well-known Armenians were California governor George Deukmejian Jr. (1928-2018) and Demos Shakarian (1913-1993).

The Turkish government has exerted enormous pressure to deny public recognition of the genocide. It was not until December of 2019 that the House of Representatives and the Senate jointly passed resolutions recognizing the brutal murders. The Turks are sensitive to the subject and have tried to make it go away through diplomatic power and threats.

On April 24, 2021, Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, President Joe Biden stated the United States considers the Armenians deaths to be “genocide” in a statement released by the White House. Biden formally equated the atrocities perpetrated against Armenians to be on the scale with those committed by Nazi Germany.

PERSONAL PROPHECIES

First Prophecy

I came back to the Lord in the spring of 1965 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Early in 1966, Aina and I prepared a reel-to-reel recorded message and prepared a list of family members in Sweden whom I had hurt in some manner. I asked the first person on the list to forgive me and requested that they forward the reel to the second person on the list.

² Shakarian, Demos; THE HAPPIEST PEOPLE ON EARTH, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1975, pp.15-22

Keep in mind, this was long before the internet existed and overseas phone calls were very expensive.

The recording affected many of our relatives and I got a response from Aina's uncle Hjalmar Ström. He was active in a Pentecostal church and part of a prayer group. When he told the story of Aina's conversion to Christ and my coming back to the Lord, a man in the group that was blind began to prophesy and Hjalmar turned on his tape recorder. The message was for both of us:

"Jesus has written your names on His hands and He will go before you. You will encounter many difficulties, and at times it will look like the road is closed, but in the last moment, I will open a door and you will be able to continue. There will be much resistance against you."

I did not have an inkling about even entering ministry at this point in my life. My plan was to work as an engineer and enjoy the good life with my wife. I did not pay attention to this prophecy until I had been in the ministry for some years and realized the truth of God's warning. This prophecy was proven true as I have experienced many difficulties, not to mention the destruction that has taken place in the churches I was pastoring.

The blind man never met us, nor do I know his name, but I heard his voice on the recording and I know it was God speaking to me through another person in Sweden.

Second Prophecy

I was contacted by a man named Ulf Knutsson around 1995. He had been listening to the preaching cassettes sent to Sweden. I did not meet him in person. We had been writing letters back and forth. We talked several times over the phone, and then one day he called and began to prophesy:

"Thus says the Almighty: Go out with the message, spread it with more bravery. Thus, says the Almighty: I am with you. I have heard your prayers. I will answer your prayers in a very surprising way. Thus says the Almighty who has created the heavens and the earth. You are going to be overrun of the gifts that I will give you and your family.

Thus says Jesus: You are to look at the cross. You shall look at my bloody hands. If you look at my wounded body and my wounded hands, so shall healing bloom in your body. Your years are many yet. Your years are not over, says the Lord.

You shall see the result and harvest of what you have sown. I have selected you in the womb to that task you are now involved in. And those who have trodden you down shall be ashamed. Amen."

The Aftermath

I do not have a written copy of the first prophecy, but the second one was recorded by Aina as Ulf spoke over the phone. We translated it into English and a copy hangs in my house.

Aina was given 28 more years after Ulf spoke to us. It is now 30 years later for me and I believe that I still have many more years to go. I am thankful that God loves me so much that He moved upon two different people I never met with a message for me. All I can say is, "Thank you Jesus!"

CONCLUSION

Mankind lives in the moment with knowledge of the past, but we cannot see into the future. God is omniscient; He is not bound by time. He can move into the past, present, and future whenever He wants. There are no surprises for Him. From our perspective, God lives in the supernatural, but from God's point of view, He is just living in the reality of His normal existence.

The prophetic word given an eleven-year-old, illiterate Boy Prophet, would go on to save a portion of the Armenian community – those who were Christians. If God had not sent that prophesy, those Armenians who came to the United States would have died and their descendants in America would not exist.

Prophecy is necessary as we get closer to the coming of the Antichrist. It is an insult to God when denominations and pastors declared that prophecy was only for the early church!

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?