

The Testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy

By Lynn Warner

At one time, my focus on prophecy was “*what is to come*” (John 16:13b, NASB). The Holy Spirit does prophesy what is to come, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. However, as I read Revelation 19:9-10 one day, I began to think about a broader, deeper meaning of the word “prophecy.”

“Then he said to me, ‘Write, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.”’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’ Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”” (Revelation 19:9-10).

What is the testimony of Jesus, and how do we hold to this testimony? The Gospels are filled with the testimony of Jesus. He testified what He had heard and seen from His Father in Heaven, Who had given Him the Spirit without measure: *“What He has seen and heard, of that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has set his seal to this, that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure”* (John 3:32-34).

The word “testimony” means establishing or proving a fact, the declaration of a witness. A “witness” is a person who knows or sees something personally, by personal presence. Our spirit represents the renewed nature of man made alive to God – the Holy Spirit is the Spirit Who gives the testimony of Jesus to those who are called in Christ’s power to hold and give the testimony of Jesus as a witness to others. Jesus explains this in John 15:26-27: *“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me, and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.”*

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus, discloses what is to come, and convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Jesus further explains the Holy Spirit’s role in John 16:7-11: *“But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”*

Then Jesus adds in verses 13b-14: *“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.”*

Jesus also declared that the world hated Him because of His testimony, as we read in John 7:7 when He was talking to His brothers (who did not believe in Him): *“The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.”*

In John 15, He advises His disciples that because the world hates Him, the world will also hate them: *“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you”* (John 15:19).

Lastly, He shared that He would send the Holy Spirit with power, so those who believe in Him would have both the testimony of Jesus and the power to testify. After He had risen, He opened the disciples’ minds to understand the Scripture and to expect to be clothed with power

from God, as we read in Luke 24:45-49: *“Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’”*

And in Acts 1:7-8, just before He ascended to the Father in Heaven, *“He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.’”*

In conclusion, though at one time I focused on “what is to come,” I began to realize that the full testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy. Jesus was anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit Who testifies of the truth of God, and He has given us His testimony and the power to testify through the Holy Spirit. Though the Spirit does disclose “what is to come” at times, the testimony of Jesus that we hold glorifies Jesus – what He has done for us and in us. We are to follow Christ and to testify or share this good news. And when the Holy Spirit opens the Scripture to us about “what is to come,” it is always in a Jesus-glorifying context. Our focus also must always be Jesus and our eternal life in Him!