



THE EAGLE IN FLIGHT

In our conversations on worship, we're discussing what worship is like in the heavens (Revelation 4). Each of the leading figures in the throne room has something to say about the nature of Christ, the One they are worshipping. Let's take a closer look at one of the four living creatures described as an eagle in flight.

Eagles can perceive vast distances. Similarly, believers with a prophetic gift are like eagles – they can 'see' long before something happens that God is on His way and is 'moving'. Worshippers who have made worship in the spirit part of their lifestyle have developed this 'ability' to 'perceive' where God is going with things. When He speaks, they discern, interpret and internalise what He is saying, enabling them to align their decision-making and communication with His.

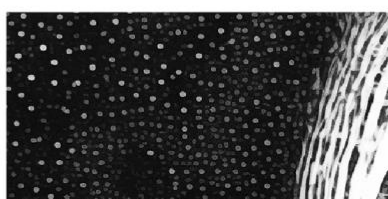
But let's look at this 'prophetic gifting' against the backdrop of what God intended with the prophetic.

Prophecy is often understood to be communication about the future, foretelling coming events. This creates the impression that Old Testament prophets were generally calling Israel's attention to prepare for future events. But that's only one aspect of what prophecy is. The Jewish leaders of Jesus' time missed the WHEN of the Old Testament prophecies because they misinterpreted the essence of WHAT – or WHO – was being prophesied.

The clearest statement we have in Scripture on the purpose of prophecy is found in Revelation 19:10 (the last part of that verse): the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The intention behind all of prophecy is that Christ should be revealed and that Christ should be revered.

Jesus comments on John the Baptist as being both the LAST and GREATEST of all the prophets (Matthew 11:11-13). John revealed Jesus to the world in a way that none of the Old Testament prophets ever could. John saw the embodied Word face-to-face. But as Jesus continues, He says the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John (Matthew 11:11). What did He mean by that? Jesus was revealing that a whole new era, a radically different approach to prophetic ministry, was about to begin.

Because of Christ's resurrection and ascension, we find ourselves INCLUDED in the most intimate relationship that ever existed – the love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And when the Holy Spirit comes to indwell a believer, ordinary human beings get to experience the most intimate aspect of God's love for anything outside of Himself. Our lives are 'flooded' with His love (Romans 5:5). His Spirit dwelling within us empowers us for an entirely new dimension of prophetic ministry.





The eye of the eagle not only has an exceptionally long visual range; the eagle also has an exceptionally broad range of vision. They can see virtually anything and everything around them with the slightest head movement. This kind of ‘immersive visual experience’ comes naturally for those who are ‘in the spirit’ (Revelation 4:2).

After His resurrection, Jesus breathed on His disciples and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’ (John 20:22). On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the new era of life in the Spirit that Jesus promised broke through (Luke 24:49). The NEW WINE of Heaven was poured out into the NEW WINESKIN of the New Testament Church. And with that, the Holy Spirit brought the atmosphere of the Kingdom of Heaven – righteousness, peace and joy – into human hearts here on earth (Romans 14:17). With God’s life in our spirit (Romans 8:9b), we find ourselves breathing in the atmosphere of Heaven, living a ‘heavenly experience’ while still here on earth (Romans 8:2).

A mature eagle can also fly at incredibly **high altitudes**. To get there, it merely spreads its wings, catching the thermal updrafts, effortlessly ‘mounting up’ and gliding in the direction the wind is moving. Everyone who has been born of the Spirit has this capacity; we were designed to ‘ride the currents’ of the Spirit; we just have to develop that ability.

As we wait on the Lord, our hearts become intertwined with His; our thoughts become infused with His perspectives; we become empowered by the strength and the capacity of the Lord Himself. The character and the power behind the throne is made available to us by the Holy Spirit as we wait on Him.

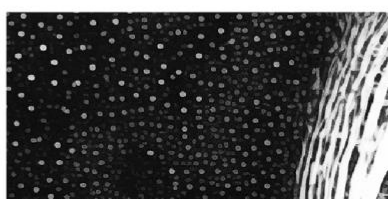
The prophetic is part of our design. The way we speak, worship, and engage with others is saturated by the prophetic nature of a life that is lived in God’s presence and power.

So here’s where the heart of the worshipper and the essence of prophecy come together.

Most of us are ‘past-present’ thinkers; what happened in the past informs how we engage in the present. But with the ascension, Jesus has invited us into His place of seeing and thinking. His default is ‘future-present’ thinking. So when He speaks prophetically into our life, He’s thinking ‘done deal’ from His side. When we accept His Word as true and ‘walk into’ what He has spoken over us, we inevitably find ourselves in the place where He already is at.

This is the effect of prophecy – it releases us from the limitations of ‘past-present’ thinking. It gives us God’s perspective so we can evaluate what we are experiencing now in the light of His long-range plans (Ephesians 1:9 MSG).

As Spirit-filled New Testament worshipers, we can also engage prophetically with others. We all have blind spots in our vision and in our lives. This is why being part of a local church is so important. In our times of corporate worship, we gaze – collectively – at Christ (2 Corinthians





3:18). We get to 'see' God's heart revealed in Christ for one another; we get to 'hear' what God has to say about each other. When you hear what Christ is saying about me, it's normally something I'm not seeing or hearing clearly – because we all have our own 'blind spots'. We all interpret what He's showing us through our own filters. But when someone else says, 'This is what I heard Him say about you', my perspective gets challenged, and I am invited to change. Prophecy enables us to see Him, ourselves and one another in a whole new light.

That's why when it comes to worship in the local church, Paul encourages believers to be filled with the Word of God and with the Spirit of God so that we can speak prophetically into each other's lives. He encourages the use of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs in this conversation (Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 5:18-19).

- **Psalms** are Scripture passages set to music – declarations about who God is and His plans for us in the context of His Kingdom (e.g. Psalm 2:6-8).
- **Hymns** are the experiences of believers from previous generations – and even this generation – that have been written down in song form. They give us vocabulary for processing the things we experience.
- **'Spiritual songs'** are those spontaneous songs that are inspired by the Holy Spirit in moments of prayer and worship.

So then, as New Testament prophets, we find in Christ both the heart and the main themes of God's PROPHETIC communication to us. God is LOVE (1 John 4:8), and Jesus is the FULLEST EXPRESSION of the love of God (John 1:14; Colossians 1:15, 19). In Jesus, we find out what the love of God is like.

The essence of the prophetic is to encourage, comfort and build up. Christ is busy washing His Bride, the Church, with the water of His word. And we have the privilege of partnering with Him as He washes His Bride with the water of His Word when we prophetically sing out over Her of the depth of His love for Her (Ephesians 5:25-27).

