

PROPHETIC PURPOSE — Part 1

By Steven Lambert, ThD

With all the proliferation and promotion of the prophetic happily taking place now in some streams and camps of the Church, it is critical that we understand what the true **Purpose** of the prophetic really is. Some prophetic novices and neophyte prophetic groups appear to think that prophecy itself, whether in the form of personal prophecy or publishing prophecies on the Internet, for example, is the goal of the prophetic. Moreover, the actions, attitudes, and speech of some regarding the prophetic seem to indicate they think that prophecy or prophesying is an end in itself. But, it's not.

Though it may seem enigmatic to say, prophecy is not the **Purpose** of the prophetic. The true **Purpose** of the prophetic is not the prophetic itself as an end in itself. It's not just prophesying. It's not seeing who can prophesy the most, the loudest, the longest the most authoritative sounding, or the most profoundly. It's not to use the prophetic to build a name for oneself, or to promote a ministry, or publicize a minister, or proliferate a movement, or to develop a means of support for a minister or income for a ministry, or to sell books, or to become well-known or famous, or to build a church, a following, or a prophetic organization, or to achieve personal ambitions. The true **Purpose** of the prophetic is none of those things.

To understand what the true **Purpose** of the prophetic is, we first have to understand what **Purpose** is. **Purpose** is one of five elements of **Vision**. **Purpose** is the *vehicle* of **Vision**. **Purpose** is what *defines* and *drives* the **Vision**. Of all the elements of **Vision**, **Purpose** is the most critical. Without **Purpose** there will be no **Performance** of the **Vision**. Without a place to go—a *destination* or **Destiny**—there's no need for a *vehicle*. Without **Destiny** there is no need for **Purpose**. **Purpose** is the substance of **Destiny**. **Purpose** and **Destiny** are not *synonymous*, but they are *symbiotic*. They are inextricably linked and interdependent, and yet they are distinct. One is meaningless without the other. **Purpose** has no reason to exist without **Destiny**, for **Purpose** is the servant of **Destiny**. **Destiny** cannot be attained without **Purpose**.

Vision and the Prophetic

Everyone is born with a **Destiny**. In order to attain unto our **Destiny**, we must have a **Vision** of our **Destiny**. We must envision and know our **Destiny** so that it can

act as a road map to tell us where we're going, and then we must have a **Purpose** to take us there. As someone has so aptly said, "If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there." That's why God told the prophet Habakkuk to write the **Vision** down—to delineate it, explain it, make it plain, make it understandable—so that those who are running to complete the vision, those who are running in the race, may run to the finish line. You can't run to the finish line, or carry the ball to the goal line, if you don't know where it is.

This article is not about **Vision**, per se, and there has been an abundance of teaching about the subject of **Vision** over the last few years, but prophetic people do need to gain some understanding on the relationship of **Vision** to the prophetic realm. **Vision** has to do with **SEEING**. If anyone should be about **Vision**, it is prophets and prophetic people. The Bible tells us that the prophets were first called "**SEERS**" before they were called prophets. Prophets see, or perceive, things that are not perceived by or manifestly obvious to others.

Many subscribers to the *SLM Prophetic Messenger* and others who will read this message are prophetic people. You have an affinity for, a calling to, an inward connection with, the prophetic. Among the readers there are prophetic people of every type and every stage in development and maturation. Many of you have been tutored and/or trained to varying degrees in the prophetic. Others are prophetic leaders themselves who are mentoring others in the prophetic. Some have ministered in the prophetic realm for a number of years, while others only for a short time. Some have been reading, studying, and learning all you can about the prophetic realm from whatever source of information and teaching you can find. Some of you may be old hands at operating in the prophetic *gifts* and some in the prophetic *office*, while others may be just learning how to operate in either or both. Nevertheless, regardless of your level or length of experience and expertise in the prophetic, I can tell you that unless you understand "prophetic **Purpose**"—that is, the **Purpose** of the prophetic—you will never tap into the dimension of prophetic flow that emanates from the Spirit of God and operate in the measure of the anointing that God intends to operate through you.

No matter how much knowledge you obtain regarding the prophetic gifts and office, you will never understand it as you need to understand it, you will never have the revelation you need to have about it, you will never be used in it as you desire or even as God desires you be used in it, you will never have the full measure of the anointing that God intends for you to have—UNTIL you understand it, not in a vacuum, or as an end in itself, not abstractly, but contextually, that is, understanding its proper application—its ultimate goal and mission—its **Purpose**.

Jesus' Primary Purpose

To understand the true Prophetic **Purpose**, we must turn to the Prophetic **Prototype**, the **Preeminent** Prophet—Jesus Himself—and examine carefully the Prophetic **Paradigm** inherent in His earthly Life and Ministry.

“The Son of God appeared for this Purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” (1 Jn. 3:8)

In this verse, the Holy Spirit revealed through the writing of the Apostle John that Jesus' **primary Purpose** was to destroy the works of the devil. He said that the primary reason the Son of God appeared was for the very **PURPOSE** of destroying the works of the devil. Destroying, or negating, undoing, reversing, bringing to naught, the works of the devil, meant restoration and redemption. The end result of His primary **Purpose** was the restoration and redemption of all things in the Creational Order of God that the devil had corrupted, perverted, and deterred through the *perdition* of Man and the *permeation* of the world with his carnal nature of sin. Of course, at the apex of that list of the corrupted that Jesus restored and redeemed was the apple of God's eye—His Mankind Creation.

Jesus had a singular, primary **Purpose**—this was His mission, His calling, and His **Destiny**. And, His **Purpose** was His **motivation**—what drove Him, what compelled Him—to do all that He did during His fleshly life and ministry here on Earth in order to fulfill His mission, calling, and **Destiny**. That **Purpose**, mission, motivation, and calling, as stated succinctly by the Spirit through the Apostle John, was to *“destroy the works of the devil.”* It was for this **Purpose** and **Destiny** that He voluntarily and eagerly left the portals of Glory, cast aside His Deity, in an act of inscrutable humility stooped to take on human form, was born in a lowly manger stall, lived for thirty-three and a half years as a

human, endured the pangs of rejection, sorrows, testings, scorn, ridicule, mocking, and disdain of His own family and people, unspeakable suffering, humiliation, death, and even momentary separation from His Father God! He did all that for a solitary purpose—to **REVERSE THE CURSE!** To give His life as a ransom for the many!—an exchange of the Sinless for the sinful, the Guiltless for the guilty, the Righteous for the unrighteous. The sins of the world were laid upon the spotless Lamb of God to redeem us and save us from the eternal punishment and banishment we so rightly deserved.

Jesus had a **Destiny**. He had a **Purpose** that drove Him to Calvary, that put bounce in His step and briskness in His cadence as He marched triumphantly out ahead of the disciples toward Jerusalem and the horrid fate that awaited Him when the time for His suffering had come. It was for the **JOY** that was set before Him that He endured the Cross—the sheer euphoria of foreseeing His mankind Creation at last **REDEEMED** by the **BLOOD OF THE LAMB**, and **RESTORED** back into **rightstanding** and **relationship** with Father God! This final outcome—**REDEMPTION** and **RESTORATION**—is what motivated the God of Love and “the God of all Grace” (1 Pet. 5:10) to come to Earth and become one of us in order to give **HIS** life as a propitiation, a substitutionary sacrifice, in exchange for ours!

But, as glorious and central to the Gospel of Christ as the prize of human **redemption** is, too often we focus upon it virtually to the exclusion of the **restoration** aspect of what He came to Earth to accomplish. The Greek word used in the New Testament 118 times to refer to various aspects of the restoration that Jesus effected by His death, burial, and resurrection is—*sozo*. The King James translators rendered the variants of this word “saved” all but a few of the times it appears. A host of Evangelical concepts revolve around that rendering of that small but key word of the Gospel. An emphasis of Evangelical teaching is that salvation or being *saved* means that “we have a home in Heaven,” and that believers will “go to Heaven” when they die. And, thank God that is true. However, the word *sozo*, per se, has nothing to do with Heaven or us going there. Rather, it connotes to *restore*, to *return to a former condition*, to *heal*, to *make whole*, and it is even the root component for the word that connotes *sanctification*, that is, to *make holy*. Seeing the salvation that Jesus purchased for us with His shed blood in this light gives it another dimension of meaning, and makes the

significance of John's declaration in First John 3:8 concerning Jesus' **Purpose** for coming to Earth more understandable and its application more comprehensible.

Jesus' **Purpose** in coming to Earth certainly included our salvation and redemption, but it also transcended human salvation and redemption to encompass all manner of restoration necessitated by sin's corruption.

Qualifying The Terms

Now, in saying that, lest I be misunderstood, I must take a moment to explain that I am not talking about the kind of restoration that was posited by some extreme and erroneous teachings that emerged during the *Latter-Rain Movement* that began in the late 1940s, known as "The Manifested Sons of God Doctrine," which is still espoused and proliferated by myriads part of Neo-Pentecostal streams today. As I have indicated, those teachings are extreme and erroneous, and the restoration proposed by them, as well as the eschatological process by which they purport it will transpire, are unequivocally incongruous and even antithetical to Scripture, and simply false. So also is the other prominent doctrine that was associated with that movement and likewise continues to be espoused and proliferated by myriads of Neo-Pentecostals—what was referred to as the "*Oneness* doctrine," or *Modalism* to use theological terminology, or another theological term is *Unitarianism* juxtaposed to *Trinitarianism*.

Indeed, these are two other salient errors that the Neo-Pentecostal Church will one day have to deal with, if it is ever going to see the genuine manifestation of the *doctrinal unity* spoken of in God's Word in such passages as Ephesians 4:3,5. This is not an issue about a non-essential element of the Gospel as so many others are that spark fleeting controversy within the Church. Much to the contrary, there simply cannot be a more central theological or Truth issue than that of who God is—Three *Persons*, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or merely one Person who *manifested* Himself in three different *modalities*. And, though this too is not the subject of this article, I think it by no means coincidental that the purveyors of the other major heretical teachings that have corrupted and damaged the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal movements, such as the Discipleship-Shepherding doctrines, espouse as well these erroneous doctrines that emerged from the Latter-Rain Movement. Indeed, the five major principals of that movement were all Latter-Rain disciples, as are so many of the most prominent Charismatic and Neo-

Pentecostal patriarchs and leaders. Moreover, this is also a problem plaguing the apostolic-prophetic renewal, in that many Pentecostals and Charismatics, and other camps or streams, are reticent to accept and associate themselves with it because restoration of the apostolic office especially has for many years, really all the way back to Asuza Street, been linked with "oneness" Pentecostals.

Personal Redemption and Restoration

So, I am not referring to restoration in the way that it is taught in those doctrines. Rather, the kind of redemption and restoration that I am talking about and that the Apostle John was talking about is *personal* redemption and restoration—the "*undoing*," in the lives of human beings, of the effects of Satan's corruptive schemes and strategies, which are a direct consequence of the *permeation* of the world with *sin* that the devil originated and the *perdition* of Mankind that transpired with the permeation of the human spirit with the sin nature of Satan at the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. **THAT** is what John was telling us was the ultimate **Purpose** of Jesus' manifestation in human form on the Earth in his statement: "*The Son of God appeared for this Purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*"

The Apostle John, who was reportedly the closest of all the disciples to Jesus and for whom Jesus had a special affection, and who witnessed most all of Jesus' miracles firsthand, is telling us in this passage that the works that Jesus performed during his fleshly life and ministry were all aimed at "*destroy(ing) the works of the devil,*" whether it was in the form of healing the sick, lame, blind, deaf and paralyzed, negating death and raising from the dead, delivering the demonized and operating in the gift of the discerning of spirits, revealing a word of knowledge or wisdom, or proclaiming prophetic insight or counsel into someone's present or future, setting at liberty the psychologically traumatized and bruised. All these were Jesus' "**works**" to "*destroy the works of the devil.*"

Doing The Works of Jesus

Jesus instructed His disciples then as well as His disciples today to "*be about the Father's business,*" to "*occupy*" until He returns. The way we do all of that is by performing the works of Jesus, doing the things that He did during His ministry on Earth. All genuine ministry is merely the extension and continuum of the ministry and mission of Jesus. And, Jesus' ministry and

mission, as we have seen, are summed up in the statement: *“The Son of God appeared for this Purpose, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”* Thus, the primary **Purpose** of all valid ministry, including prophetic ministry, is to *“destroy the works of the devil.”* The ultimate goal of all genuine ministry, and all of its facets—from salvation to redemption to rightstanding to justification to restoration to all manner of healing to deliverance to sanctification, spirit, soul, and body—is to in some way **destroy the works of the devil**—in **PEOPLE**, and to that extent *“the restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time”* (Acts 3:21) on this **PLANET**. The supernatural power to *perform* His works is **His power**; it flows from Him. And, His **power** is connected with His **Purpose**. When we become *connected* with His **Purpose**—i.e., plugged into the source of power—we become *conduits* of His **power**!

Concerning His *“works”*—operations of supernatural power—Jesus said to His disciples:

“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His WORKS. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe on account of the WORKS themselves. Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the WORKS that I do shall he do also; and greater WORKS than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.” (Jn. 14:10-12)

When Jesus Ascended On High

And, then on the Day of Ascension, Jesus did indeed *“go to the Father.”* After having been raised from the dead on that original Easter morning, which Christians have celebrated every year since, and appearing to the Apostles and many others in His resurrected Body, on what we now call the Day of Ascension, He was taken up on a cloud and ascended into Heaven, and *“sat down at the right hand of God.”*

But, something else happened that day as Jesus was ascending, an awesome and totally astounding trans-action in the Spirit realm, which none of those present that day, apparently, though understandably, perceived. Who among us also would not have been transfixed by the glorious events those present that day witnessed—Jesus being transported upward into Heaven on a cloud of glory, and two angels arrayed in dazzling white garments that glowed who appeared and spoke unto them those now infamous words, *“Men of Galilee, why*

stand ye gazing up into Heaven...?” And, to a great extent, and to its detriment, that is where the Church as a whole has been and what it has been doing for two-thousand years—standing and gazing up into Heaven, transfixed on the splendid event of the ascension of Christ into Heaven and His promised likewise glorious return—instead of picking up the mantle that fell down upon us, a la Elijah and Elisha, and setting out to *“strike the waters”* with His mantle, so to speak, and crying out, *“Where is the God of Elijah?”* and going forth with His mantle of power effectualized by His “Great Commission” battle cry declaration (Mk. 16:15-18) to operate the works of Jesus (acts of supernatural power) unto a lost, dying, and sin-corrupted generation. We can totally understand, though, how those present that day were so mesmerized by the *natural* events they were witnessing with their own eyes. Yet, the result of their transfixion with the *natural* was apparently that none of them *saw* what the Apostle Paul *saw by the Spirit* that transpired as Jesus was ascending into Heaven. For it was Paul, the *“apostle born late,”* not Peter, James, John, or any of the Twelve, all of whom were eye-witnesses of Jesus’ ascension, who revealed to us what Paul perceived by revelation of the Spirit concerning what transpired in the *Spirit realm* as Jesus was ascending in Heaven—

“Therefore it says, when He ascended on High, He led captive a host of captives, and He gave gifts to men (Now this expression, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.” (Eph. 4:8-11)

This passage and the verses that follow, which have become so familiar to many in the Charismatic and apostolic-prophetic renewal, are revealing to us the truth that as Jesus was ascending into Heaven, He relegated or delegated to men the ministry giftings He Himself had manifested during His fleshly ministry. The giftings that He imparted were what we now refer to as the “Fivefold Ministry Offices.” And, the verses that follow reveal the Divine **PURPOSE** inherent in those gifts that He bestowed upon men:

1. **The equipping of the saints** — for the work of service or ministry—to enable them to do the works of Jesus and complete His continuing ministry (v. 12);

2. **Spiritual and Numerical Growth** — the equipped saints (believers) build up the Body of Christ, spiritually and numerically through their ministry works (v. 12);
3. **Truth-Centric Unity** — singleness of mind and solidarity of purpose, centered around consensual faith in and knowledge concerning the Son of God (v. 13);
4. **Maturing of the Body of Christ** — unto a mature (perfected) man, to the measure of the stature (Christ's character, which brings Christ's power, anointing) which belongs to the fullness of Christ (v. 13);
5. **Doctrinal Purity and Stability** — so that the Body of Christ will no longer be like children, being "tossed about," being led here and there by false doctrine, and captivated by the trickery and deceitful scheming of men, but will be founded, grounded, and stabilized in "sound doctrine" (v. 14; cf, 1 Tim. 4:6, 2 Tim. 4:3, Tit. 1:9, 2:1);
6. **Corporate Character Development** — by speaking the truth in love—love and grace tempered reproof—the Body of Christ will grow up in **all aspects** unto Christ, becoming conformed unto the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29), reflecting His Image as the moon reflects the image of the sun, so that the collective Body of Christ will be lights in the midst of the blackness of a crooked and perverse generation (v. 15);
7. **Concinnity** — all of the various and diverse parts of the Body working together to form one unified Body—the Body of Christ—working together in harmony and one accord, that results when each part is functioning properly and supplying to the Body the unique benefit or function it is designed to provide (v. 16);
8. **PURPOSE and DESTINY** — concinnity causes the growth of the Body for the building up of itself in **LOVE—actions of "otherness"**—the ultimate goal of the instruction of God's Word (1 Tim. 1:5).

Prophetic Purpose Revealed

So Jesus relegated and delegated giftings, which include the prophetic gifts and office, for the carrying on of His **ultimate Purpose and Plan of building HIS Church**, over which the gates (power) of Hell or Hades would and will not prevail (Mat. 16:18).

We see then that the Church—the **Body** of Christ, the **Betrothed** of Christ, which will ultimately be the **Bride** of Christ, the Lamb's Wife—**IS THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE AND PLAN OF GOD AND CHRIST! WE ARE IT!**

Hence, we see also that "Prophetic Purpose," ultimately, is the edifying or building up of Jesus' Church. And as, I have already stated, when those of us who are a part of the Prophetic Division of God's Army, at last get plugged into Christ's **Purpose**, we will be plugged into His **POWER**, as He was during His fleshly ministry on Earth, so that we can **work the works of Jesus** that are aimed at destroying the **works of the devil**. For it is like plugging an electrical appliance into an electrical outlet, the source of power, which **empowers** it to **perform** its intended **purpose**.

Stay tuned. In *Part Two* we'll look at more specifics of **Prophetic Purpose**.

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Dr. Steven Lambert has been blessing the Church over more than two decades of fruitful pastoral, prophetic, and teaching ministry. He is an ordained minister and board certified Doctoral Diplomate Christian Therapist, holds several earned theological degrees, and is the Executive Director of *Vision International Ministerial Association*, a fellowship of Fivefold Ministers relating and collaborating for common purposes. Dr. Lambert also serves as editor of several periodical and Internet publications, and is the author of a number of books, booklets, Bible college courses, and other teaching materials.