



part 1 of 2—

# Your Sons and Daughters Will Prophecy

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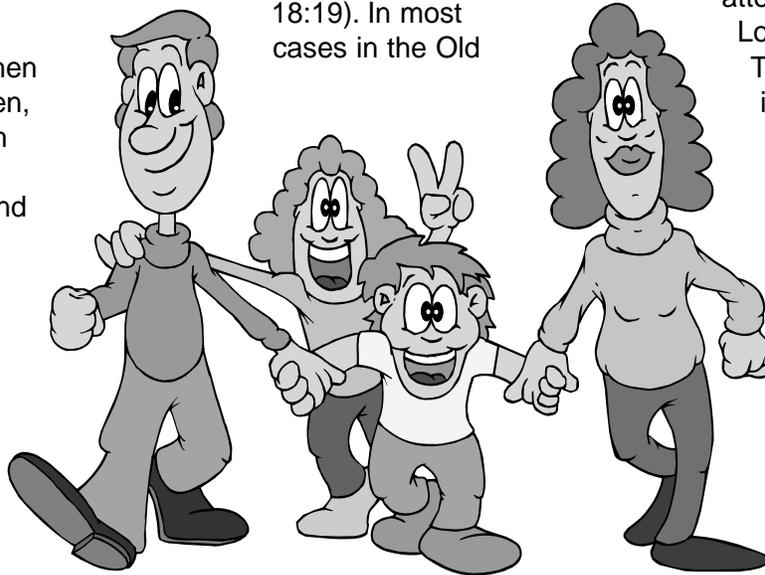
**D**id God have children in mind when He inspired the prophet Joel to write, “Your sons and daughters will prophesy” (Joel 2:28)? Looking at the context, we see the passage begins with the promise, “I will pour out my Spirit on all people” (Hebrew *kol basar*— “all flesh”).

First, God identifies sons and daughters, then old men and young men, then His servants, both men and women (Hebrew, *ha`avadim* and *hashshephachoth*: “the male slaves and the female slaves”).

Clearly, the intent is to show that the promise of the Spirit and the impartation of prophetic gifts is for all people without regard to race, sex, age, social status, or national origin. These manifestations of prophetic gifts were important from early times, for they were and are evidences of the presence of God in the midst of His people. (See 1 Corinthians 14:24,25, where prophesying will cause visitors to exclaim, “God is really among you!”)

## Biblical Examples

The word “prophet” (Hebrew, *navi*) comes from an old word meaning “a speaker,” but it came to mean “a person who spoke for God, or for gods,” since there were pagans who claimed to be prophets, such as prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:19). In most cases in the Old



Testament, those who prophesied (spoke for God) were mature men and women. But God also used children. Samuel is an example.

### The Boy Samuel

God used Samuel to speak His word to Eli when Samuel was still a child. It is true that the

Hebrew term by which he is called, *hanna`ar* (1 Samuel 3:1), can mean a boy or a young man. However, the Bible says, “The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord” (1 Samuel 3:19,20).

This indicates that he was indeed a young boy when he began to prophesy and that he continued to speak for God “as he grew up.” That he “did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him” (1 Samuel 3:7) also shows that he was still a child who had not yet come to know the Lord in a personal way when God first spoke to him.

### The Boy Zephaniah

Another who began to prophesy when he was quite young is Zephaniah. His genealogy in verse 1 of his book shows he was descended from King Hezekiah and that he prophesied in the days of King Josiah. Josiah was eight years old when

he became king and he reigned 31 years in Jerusalem. But Zephaniah's genealogy shows there was one more generation between him and Hezekiah than between Josiah and Hezekiah. Because of this it seems probable that Zephaniah was a child or not more than a teenager when he began to prophesy.

## For the Children

On the Day of Pentecost, when the 120 received the promise and

spoke in tongues (Acts 2:4), Peter said, "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). Then he proceeded to manifest the gift of prophecy, glorifying Jesus Christ, calling those who were gathered to repentance, and warning and pleading with them by the gift of exhortation. He followed his call to repentance with the promise that after they repented and were baptized in water, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He emphasized, "The promise is

for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39).

The promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit would continue to be available to them, to their children, and to the Gentiles. (See Ephesians 2:17, where those who are far away are the Gentiles.) More than that, the promise would continue to be available to all whom the Lord would call to be saved.

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### Questions for Further Study—

1. The promise of the Holy Spirit was given for whom?
2. What verses indicate that Samuel and Zephaniah were young when they first began to prophesy?
3. How do we know the gift of the Holy Spirit is available to people today?
4. How do we know the gift of the Holy Spirit is available to **children** today?

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