

KEEP THESE THINGS IN MIND WHEN CONSIDERING NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY:

- The Gift of Prophecy - practically defined as “the human report of a divine communication” or “verbally sharing something which God spontaneously brings to mind”
- Prophecy is NOT absolutely equivalent with “Thus saith the Lord!”
- Prophecy is NOT parallel with the authority of Scripture.
- Prophecy is always measured against the revelation of the written Word, which alone functions as “Thus saith the Lord!”
- Prophecy is described as being “in part” in 1 Cor. 13:9. This verse alone signifies a distinction between NT & OT prophetic activity and standards.

I. The Purpose of Prophecy {please include the underlining below for emphasis}

- “On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.” (14:3)
- “...but the one who prophesies builds up the church.” (14:4b)
- “The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.”(14:5c)
- “But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.” (14:24-25)
- “For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged...” (14:31a)
- Acts 15:32 - And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.

New Testament prophecy is not defined by the Apostle Paul as someone predicting doomsday events, raining down judgment on others or setting dates for events. This gift is described as believers speaking words which minister edifying strength, health and comfort to other believers.

II. The Pursuit of Prophecy

- “Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.” (14:1)
All Christians may prophesy and are commanded to pursue prophecy. This gift is available to all believers.
- “...but even more to prophesy.” (14:5b)
- “...since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.” (14:12)
- “So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy...” (14:39a)

Remember Acts 2:16-18: “This is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: 17 “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 even on My male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out My Spirit, and they shall prophesy.”

III. The Proving of Prophecy

- Test prophecy (1 Cor. 14:29) - “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.” {diakrino (dee-ak-ree'-no); to separate thoroughly, i.e. (literally and reflexively) to withdraw from, or (by implication) oppose; figuratively, to discriminate (by implication, decide), or (reflexively) hesitate}
- Value prophecy (1 Thess 5:20-21) - “Do not despise {contemptible, despise, least esteemed, set at nought} prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good.”