

PROPHECY

"For to one is given by the Spirit...prophecy." (I Corinthians 12:10)

WHAT THIS GIFT IS NOT

1. "Careful examination will show that the gift does not in itself convey the power to predict the future. To prophesy does not mean to foretell, but simply to speak for another" (Harold Horton, pg. 163, The Gifts Of The Spirit)
2. "It can be affirmed that there is not one single instance of the gift of prophecy being deliberately resorted to for guidance in the New Testament" (Donald Gee, Pg. 50, Concerning Spiritual Gifts)

DANGER

How sad that so many have been shipwrecked in their faith because of listening to someone prophesy God's will over them. How sad that without roots in the Word, the church, etc., many will look to a third party to discover the will of God.

WHAT IS THE GIFT OF PROPHECY?

The Hebrew Words For Prophecy Mean:

1. "To Flow Forth" (like a fountain)
2. "To Bubble Forth" (or boil over)
3. "To Let Drop" (like rain from bursting clouds)
4. "To Lift Up" (like a banner)

The Greek Word Means:

1. "To Speak For Another"
2. "To Speak For God"
3. "To Be His Spokesman"

PROPHECY IS...

- ...A divinely inspired and anointed utterance.
- ...A supernatural utterance in a known tongue.
- ...A message from God to the congregation gathered together.
- ...A gift that, "can sweep the assembly up into heights of glory and enthusiasm, can melt with tenderness, and make to tremble with awe" (D. Gee, pg. 51, Concerning Spiritual Gifts)

WHAT ARE THE SCRIPTURAL PURPOSES OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY?

1. Prophecy is for speaking unto men supernaturally (I Corinthians 14:3). In tongues men speak to God supernaturally (14:2), in prophecy God speaks to men supernaturally, using the speech organs of man. And in this speaking, we will learn from God the facts and ideas He is wanting to share (14:31).
2. Prophecy is to edify the church, the believers (I Corinthians 14:4). To edify literally means to build up spiritually, make more effective, and motivate to greater godliness.
3. Prophecy is to exhort the church (I Corinthians 14:3). To exhort literally means "to call near" or admonish and encourage. It is never a "telling off" but a "calling onward".
4. Prophecy is to comfort the church (I Corinthians 14:3,31). To comfort literally means to console, solace or comfort in trial or distress. Yes; by this gift God will bring cheer to His people, the church.
5. Prophecy is to convict the unbeliever of sin and make manifest the secrets of his heart (I Corinthians 14:24,25). "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, (a sinner) or one unlearned (a person ignorant of spiritual gifts and the baptism in the Holy Spirit) he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God and report that God is in you of a truth".

(over)

Yes, as intimate facts are revealed about the condition of the unbeliever's heart, he is convinced of God's reality and converted to Christ. No wonder Paul exhorted, "Despise not prophesyings" (I Thessalonians 5:20) since God will, at times, use this gift to convict of sin and bring people to Himself.

BALANCE IS A KEY

If an earthly father never corrected his children, there would be no growth and maturity. Yet if the father was always telling them they were wrong, there would be no loving relationship between the two. But remember, true prophecy will never be harshly condemnatory of believers. It may exhort, admonish and strongly counsel them, but it will never rebuke in public. That's the job of the Word of God.

HOW TO TEST (JUDGE) A PROPHETIC UTTERANCE

"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge" (I Corinthians 14:29)

REVELATION 19:10 IS OUR GUIDE...

"...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"

ASK YOURSELF

1. What does the message afford Jesus?
2. How was Jesus lifted up and magnified?
3. What did Jesus speak through it?
4. How was Jesus' church (the local gathering) edified, encouraged or comforted?
(I Corinthians 14:3)

THE GIFT OF PROPHECY (vs) THE OFFICE OF THE PROPHET

Paul emphasizes the exhortive rather than the revelatory aspect of prophecy to the Corinthians. Prophecy is a word of encouragement and comfort for the people, overcoming satan's most crippling weapons - condemnation and discouragement. Prophecy will call believers to consecration and holiness, encourage separation from the world, bring encouragement when needed and help ready them for Jesus' return.

While the gift of prophecy can be exercised through any believer (as God wills), the ministry and office of the prophet will belong to specific people that God calls into the ministry. This difference is illustrated in the visit of Paul to the house of Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8-11). Philip had four daughters who prophesied, but God sent the prophet Agabus (with a word of knowledge) as to what awaited Paul in Jerusalem.

While the ministry of a prophet is a specific calling from God (a ministry gift to equip the saints for ministry) the gift of prophecy can be evident in any believer who is open and yielded to the Holy Spirit.

REMEMBER:

That, prophecy is a gift primarily, to sharpen, to illumine and to energize the already revealed truths of Scripture. Prophecy is never to be a substitute for the preached Word of God, is never to be sought after for guidance, and is never to be despised or quenched in our meetings (unless it is out of order).

AMEN