

Connect Group Studies



'Bringing God and people together'

Prophecy – November 2008

Prophecy defined

Knowledge of the future obtained from God.

To prophesy literally means to speak on behalf of another.

1 Corinthians 14:24 (AMP) *giving inspired testimony and interpreting the divine will and purpose.*

About Prophecy

Prophecy is listed as one of the gifts God gave the church (**Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:28**).

The gift of prophecy is a manifestation (demonstration or expression) of the Holy Spirit.

(1 Corinthians 12:7)

Example of Prophecy in the Bible

In **Acts 2**, When the promised Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' disciples, He moved them out on to the streets and made a display of some of the gifts which are a manifestation of His presence.

Then Peter stood up and addressed the crowd: "...this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy ...'"

This demonstrated Jesus' vision for the church. Jesus' Church would be His anointed

body to bring life to a dying world. He would empower us to preach good news to the poor, free captives, give sight to the blind, release the oppressed and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Jesus' Church would be filled with His sin-cleansing, life-renewing, devil-defeating power.

(Luke 4:18-21, Matt 16:13-19)

The gift of prophecy has been given to the church to help us fulfil this vision.

In both old and new testaments, prophets were mouthpieces for God. They were called to speak God's words to people, situations, cities, dry bones, mountains, or whatever God told them to speak to.

(Ps 81:10, Is 55:11 and Heb 4:12)

Jesus is our greatest prophet. Moses prophesied of him ([Deut 18:15,18-19](#)). As the Lord of His Church Jesus teaches us the will of God, not only when he was in person on the earth but also by his word and Spirit now that He is exalted in power in heaven.

What does prophecy look like?

Prophecy can come as a picture or vision, as a statement or a wise answer. ([Proverbs 16:1, Luke 21:15](#))

Things to know about prophecy

1. **Prophecy builds people up.** It does not tear people down; rather it constructively aids their spiritual progress and gives them encouragement in the process.

[1 Cor 12:7, I Cor 14:1-4](#) [Isaiah 50:4](#)

2. **Prophets bring to light the things of God** which have been previously concealed, and consistently proclaim the message of God.

3. **We need to have spiritual discernment** (*wisdom, assessment*) and judge words from God.

[Matthew 7:15-23](#)

4. **Prophecy must be in line with the Word of God**, and a personal word should confirm something that is already in your heart.

[1 Thessalonians 5:19-21](#)

Ideas for incorporating prophecy into your life

Offer yourself for God to use you to bless or help someone else at church. Ask Him to give you something to give them. His answer may be to give you something to say – perhaps in the middle of a conversation He will put words in your mouth that will make a difference and bring life.

When God gives you “a word”: check if you have peace that it is from Him, write it down, ask Him who or what it’s for, ask for His timing and opportunity to speak it out, if it’s a quote from the bible look up references and read the context, ask him to show you the meaning.

Questions

1. Have you every prophesied or received a prophecy?
2. How could you apply the things you have learnt about prophecy to your life now?
3. What is your understanding of spiritual discernment and how are you in this area? (You may want to refer back to Matt 7:15-23)

Study notes for leaders

(A more in-depth look at the topic as well as additional scripture references if you wish to study further).

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21.

19 Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. 20 Do not scoff at prophecies, 21 but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good.

Prophecy must be in line with the Word of God, and a personal word should confirm something that is already in your heart. Do not act on someone telling you to go do something unless you know God has spoken in your heart this same word. If someone prophesies to you something that is not already in your heart, perhaps write down the words and just wait for God to reveal whether or not it's from Him. Sometimes that takes years. Even when we have a clear direction from God, we need to let Him fulfil His promises in His time. The final test of whether a prophecy is true is if it happens or not (**Jeremiah 28:9**).

If a prayerful, godly person has spoken a good word over you, then opposition is one of the signs that their message was truly from God. Refer back to the spoken or written message when the devil tells you that you are not called or that you will never have what was promised.

What has been prophesied will help you remain strong in faith because you know what the Lord has said about you.

Romans 12:6

In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you.

There are modern-day prophets gifted by God to foretell future events, but not everyone who prophesies is called to stand in the office of a prophet. Those who desire to be used by God need to be prepared to let Him deal with them concerning the things they say so that they will be able to represent him well when the time comes to speak his word.

Proverbs 15:4, 15:7, 16:23, Psalm 141:3

Q: What does the bible mean when it says if we despise prophecy we will quench the Holy Spirit? 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21. 19 Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. 20 Do not scoff at prophecies, 21 but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good.

A: First - we must love the preaching of God's word or we will quench the progress the Holy Spirit desires us to make. We need God's Word as spiritual food in order to grow and be spiritually healthy.

Second - we should not have a judgemental or bad attitude toward the gift of prophecy or the other gifts of the Spirit. We should respect and cherish all of God's ways and honour the people he chooses to work through. The gifts of the Spirit are for our benefit to help us grow and mature.

Note: With prophecies as with all of God's stated will, we normally still have a choice of consent and cooperation in order to have it fulfilled.

Further study: Read I Corinthians 14:1-4, 11b, 22b-40