



Scriptures and Doctrine :: New testament prophesy?

New testament prophesy? - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/9/10 18:33

We see in paul's writings and the epistles, encouragment to be used in prophetic utterances.my questions are

- 1, what is it,
2, how is it outworked in the church
3, how is it outworked in meetings
4, what does scripture tell us of our use of it.

Can we decide to prophesy at will one to another, to build up each other,is this correct?
Is the gift personal or corporate or both or neither.
:-)

Re: New testament prophesy? - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2004/9/14 11:24

Quote:
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Hi Delboy,

There are considerable debates concerning this issue. I'll just state my views, which are open to corrections by others.

It seems to me that "prophecy" in the sense of predictive utterances is not the primary meaning in the OT. "Prophets," in my view, are God's spokpersons who utter a timely word from God to his people in light of their current, specific situations. The concern is more present than future. It is in this sense that Tozer was considered a prophet of the 20th century.

1 Cor. 14 would be the primary biblical text on this issue. In my own church tradition, prophesying is both spontaneous and orderly. There is a time when any one who "felt led by God" could stand up and speak to edifying the church, one after another. However, spontaneity does not mean chaos. The leading ones will sought to conduct the meeting in an orderly fashion.

In practice, I think we have to be careful because whenever the floor is open to everyone, the human tendency is to take the opportunity to express our own opinion, complaints, and many other harsh words. Things can easily get out of control... words from my own experience. :)

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/14 11:27

Quote:
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Hi Sam

Would your 'church tradition' distinguish between direct inspired utterance and spontaneous exposition of scripture?

Re: - posted by mloaks, on: 2004/9/14 11:35

Philo, can you also further elaborate 'between direct inspired utterance and spontaneous exposition of scripture?' Is the latter preferred in this age?

Re: - posted by lwpray (), on: 2004/9/14 11:36

Just a small story from a prayer meeting:

We were introducing a prayer subject related to the European Union and a gathering of the PMAs on the nations involved in a nearby city.

We had been invited to do so.

For some untold reason the pastor in the church in which the prayer gathering were held got "cold feet". When I had presented the prayer subject this pastor began to speak in tongues and interpreted it to say:

"Thus says the Lord, Widerberg shall keep quiet."

No more intercession during that gathering.

Misuse of the "Gift of prophesy".

The story is hilarious – the spiritual function of that church is miserable.

Lars

Re: - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/9/14 11:36

good question Ron, I'll wait for Sam's reply.

thanks Sam.

I'm reading Wayne Grudem's The gift of prophecy ISBN 58134-243-8 it's helpful onwards! :-)

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/14 11:49

Quote:
-----Philo, can you also further elaborate 'between direct inspired utterance and spontaneous exposition of scripture?' Is the latter the preferred in this age?

Hi mloaks

It was a 'loaded question' in that I know some groups who say New Testament prophecy is now fulfilled in the God's spokesman, the preacher/teacher. So there are some who, when they say prophecy, would not distinguish that in any way from preaching. Agent001 has the word 'spontaneous' which makes me think his 'church tradition' does see a distinction, but I wanted him to answer so that we are clear in this discussion as to what we are really talking about.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/14 11:52

Quote:
-----The story is hilarious – the spiritual function of that church is miserable.

I have some stories similar to that. I sometimes say that if I ever write an autobiography I am going to call it 'the deeper into the woods you go, the more nuts you find'. :-P

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2004/9/15 12:31

Philologos,

In our current practice, we do have a sermon on the Lord's Day where the Word is expounded to edify the Church.

Usually on an evening during the week, we gather together in small groups for a time of bible study and fellowship. By "spontaneity," I mean the flexibility in these meetings whereby all members follow the lead of the Spirit to exercise their gifts in order to build up the Body. Prophesying, in this context, would be sharing what we have learned and experienced

Scriptures and Doctrine :: New testament prophesy?

during the week when God's *written* Word was enlivened and made relevant in our daily living.

I think this would rule out "directly inspired utterances," especially in the sense of some extrabiblical knowledge that carries divine authority. God can certainly miraculously reveal some specific and special knowledge to someone in rare circumstances, but this should be received with much discernment, and should *never* receive an elevated status. I believe God's usual means today is to speak through the written Word and make it relevant to our lives through the Spirit (i.e. "illumination"). I am generally skeptical about people who make predictive prophecies or authoritative "new revelations".

I hope this clarifies my position.

P.S. I think prophesying often takes the form of preaching. But is preaching always prophesying? Perhaps not necessarily? I think prophesying is a *timely* appropriation of God's *timeless* truth in light of the present condition of the church. Ideally preaching should always do that, but there are occasions where the emphasis is on teaching.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/15 15:43

Quote:
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I think the term 'revelation' could cover both the unveiling of aspects of scripture from the text and an awareness that the speaker has that he is hearing what God is thinking.

I think it is better to keep a clear distinction between the terms 'teach' 'preach' 'prophecy'. You are right, I think, when you suggest that it may not always be possible to separate the different operations. If they were kept in watertight compartments the labels would be 'doctrine' 'proclamation' and 'prophecy'. These are not synonymous terms.

An exercise of prophecy is a revelation of the mind of God for that specific time. It may relate to the past, the present or even the future. I would never put either 'doctrine' 'proclamation' or 'prophecy' on a level with the scriptures. In that sense I would receive each of these with an open heart and an alert mind, knowing that if they are from the Spirit who inspired the scripture they will never be contrary to that revelation.

I understand your skepticism regarding predictive prophecies and, I would add, directive prophecy. New revelation can only be the result of God giving light on the scripture in the sense of the counsel given to the Pilgrim Fathers as they set sail from Holland I charge you before God and His blessed angels to follow me no farther than I have followed Christ. If God should reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth of my ministry; for I am very confident the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy word."-

see full quotation here

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2004/9/16 9:05

Quote:
-----I understand your skepticism regarding predictive prophecies and, I would add, directive prophecy. New revelation can only be the result of God giving light on the scripture

Yes, I would include "directive prophecy" in my list. That is not to say that the Spirit does not lead us at all through inward impressions and promptings (these I often experience), or even dreams and visions (these I have no experience at all). However, one should be discerning and should never place them over the authority of God's written word. Some charismatics sometimes make me nervous when they make their (extrabiblical) "prophetic claims" with such certainty and confidence.

To me, an obsession with the supernatural is indicative of spiritual immaturity and laziness. We should rather let God be God, walk by faith, not by sight.

Re: Prophecy - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2004/9/16 9:30

I once heard a speaker say that he believed that Paul exhorted us to "despise not prophecy", because it is the spiritual gift that is most prone to "flakiness".

I believe that prophecy can manifest as "divinely inspired, timely advice" (words of wisdom, and knowledge).

I prophesy, in this manner, personally, however I am always careful to inform the hearer to disregard what I have to say, if God hasn't been speaking to them personally regarding the same matter. I am also careful not to operate out of my own understanding, informing hearers that I personally know things when I do.

My wife operates in predictive style of prophecy, however she rarely tells the people concerned, only myself, so we can pray about the situation, effectively.

I know I've just opened myself up to a lot of criticism, saying this, but I'm not going to lie about my convictions.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/9/16 10:39

Quote:
-----I prophesy, in this manner, personally...I know I've just opened myself up to a lot of criticism, saying this, but I'm not going to lie about my convictions.

Greg has a little pile of stones he's been saving for me...

Aaron
I have functioned in prophecy in local church settings and conferences for many years. I have also sneaked one or two into meetings that didn't believe in 'that kind of thing'. :-D

In my experience there is a distinct difference between a spontaneous revelation of 'light' in the scripture and a spontaneous prophetic utterance. The latter always comes as a surprise to the mind and is seldom fully formed. You make a start and see where it goes. Revelation in the scripture has much more of a slow burn; whereas a prophecy arrives quickly in its initial stages.

These are my personal experiences too and not to be set as any kind of standard. When talking to children in explaining the function of contemporary prophecy in the church I often say.. When a person suddenly becomes aware of what God is thinking and speaks it out, we call that a prophecy. I believe, from scripture, that Paul saw prophecy as a fundamental need in a local church, hence 'but rather that ye may prophesy...'

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2004/9/16 12:05

Quote:
-----My wife operates in predictive style of prophecy, however she rarely tells the people concerned, only myself, so we can pray about the situation, effectively.

I know I've just opened myself up to a lot of criticism, saying this, but I'm not going to lie about my convictions.

In times when I feel God has warned me of things or revealed things about current circumstances it always creates or I should say accompanies an urgency to pray and seek God for the wisdom to do what God would have me do and for His divine intervention. God reserves the right to warn His people about things and if we are to be utterly New Testamently Biblical He is a lot more active in the common affairs of the Church in Acts than today. The reason for this is manifold- but the message is the same, "He that hath an ear let them hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." That voice is far too often silenced and men do what is right in their own eyes. Interpreting scripture subjectively based upon their own lusts, etc.- rather than allowing the Holy Ghost to interpret and apply it. Excesses, abuses and down right flakiness, falsehood and deception has caused this generation in many cases to "despise prophesying" and down right reject the moving of the Spirit in our lives and meetings. The attitude of many fundamentalists towards these things has often been like the attitude of my great grandmother who would spank every child in the house when she did not know the guilty party. The attitude

Scriptures and Doctrine :: New testament prophesy?

ude, "I'll spank you all and I'll get the right one!"

When God shows up we'll know it- that is, His sheep will hear His voice and another they will not follow.

I have been reading George Fox's autobiography and I am stunned at the level of ministry he was functioning in. We have not seen it in our day (that I am aware), but would to God that He would raise up some prophets with a boldness like that. We need to see the true prophetic unction of God warning the people and calling them to repent. We need the Spirit of the Lord upon us that we might do the works of Christ as He did them when the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him. Utterly humble and faceless (seeking no reputation) and utterly for His glory.

God Bless,

-Robert

Re: - posted by Delboy (), on: 2004/9/16 13:23

Hi Aaron, you said;

Quote:
-----My wife operates in predictive style of prophecy, however she rarely tells the people concerned, only myself, so we can pray about the situation, effectively.

Have you opened yourself to be criticised? I think not.

It seems to me that you are used in bringing the prophetic but you don't blow your own trumpet or give yourself a title. That is admirable and refreshing.

Too many today look towards the old testament way of functioning e.g. THE prophet, THE worship leaders.

thanks for your openness :-)