

MEDITATE ON THIS

2 PETER 1: 19

"So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation."

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

Who is a Prophet and How to Judge Prophecies
– Audio Message (Dr David Ogaga)

Accurate Building Pattern
– Book (Dr David O. Ogaga)

New Season, New Requirement, New Spirit
– Book (Maxwell E. Ogaga)

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Present TRUTH

"...and be established in the present truth." 2 Peter 1:12

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THE BASIC MINISTRY OF THE PROPHET

In our day and age, there is a rise in the ministry of the prophet. Everywhere you turn, there is a prophet prophesying. In view of this, I would like to begin our teachings this year, on the basic function of the ministry of the prophet via this newsletter.

We must understand that there is a difference between prophesying which is a gift (1 Corinthians 14:1) and the office of the prophet which is one of the fivefold ministries (Eph 4:11). The fact that someone prophesies does not necessarily make them a prophet. Apostle Paul clearly asks this question in "1 Corinthians 12:28" *And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. 29 All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they?"*

Prophecy according to 1 Corinthians 12 &

14, is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, through which God gives a message directed to the body of the believers present in the meeting for the purpose of their edification, exhortation and comfort. As 1 Corinthians 14:3-4 says:

"But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and comfort. he who prophesies edifies the church."

You immediately have here both the audience of the prophecy and its purpose. The audience is the church, the body of the believers present in the meeting. The purpose of prophecy is to edify, exhort and comfort the audience- the body of the believers. Therefore, we can safely conclude that prophecy (messages from God brought forth from the believers for the edification, exhortation and comfort of the church) was present in church meetings in the New Testament times and should normally be present today, too.

We must see clearly here that the purpose of the gift of prophecy in manifestation in any meeting should meet the biblical criteria of 1 Corinthians 14:3-4.

AVAILABLE THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Let us note that the gift of prophecy through

the Holy Spirit is within every believer and in line with 1 Corinthians 14:3-4, we can bring forth prophetic word to edify, exhort and comfort the body of believers. Paul had the same desire that Moses had in the Old Testament when he cried that he wished all of God's people were prophets- Numbers 11: 29. In other words, they had the innate ability to hear God for themselves.. This cry was answered through the death of Jesus that made the Holy Spirit available to the believer.

1 Corinthians 14:5 "Now I want you ALL to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy."

Paul's desire, was that ALL speak in tongues and even more, ALL prophesy. As he also says in the same chapter-1 Corinthians 14:31 "*you can ALL prophesy one by one..*" and in 1 Corinthians 14:1 "*Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.*"

We can ALL prophesy i.e. bring forth a message from God for the edification, exhortation and comfort of the local church. But this does not mean that we all have the ministry of a prophet in the sense of Ephesians 4:11.

1 Cor 14:26 "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."

In the first century church, the active and spontaneous participation of the believers ("each of them") in the meeting was normal. Not only was it allowed, but it was also expected! "Each of you", says Paul. Each of them was bringing to the meeting whatever he had: a psalm, a teaching, a tongue with interpretation, a revelation. The purpose? The edification of the body of the believers. They were all participating with whatever God had given them.

What is the Basic function of the Prophetic Office?

There is so much to cover in this topic. I would like to go straight to the basic function of the New Testament prophet but we must first understand from scriptures that Old Testament prophets functioned in a specific way because then everyone could not hear God for themselves, this is a very important point to note. But not so in the New Testament, in fact for you to call yourself a son of God in this dispensation and not hear God for yourself then your Christianity is questionable. The emphatic statement of Jesus is "my sheep hear my voice" John 10:27 and also to be the son of God, you must be led by the spirit of God – Romans 8:14.

Now let's read 2 Chronicles 24:19 "Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear."

This basically defines the role of the prophetic ministry and office in this dispensation- it is essentially to bring men back to the LORD. Not to ourselves, our ministry or to make us famous. The ministry of the prophet is essentially the ministry of restoration of genuine and true worship. This completely agrees with the mandate given to the fivefold ministry in Ephesians 4.: 12" *to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*"

All ministry gifts including the office of a prophet is given for equipping the saints and for bringing the saints into maturity; not keeping them as babes, always wanting a word from the prophet. Therefore, essentially, the prophet restores man back to God.

That is why someone like Abraham could be called a prophet- through him the Blessing of God was going to be spread round the earth, restoring man back to God - (Gen 18:17-19, Gen 20:7).

John the Baptist without a single miracle or prediction over anyone except when he identified Jesus as been the Lamb of God was called a prophet, why? Because he was going to be used to restore true worship and redirect men back to Jesus.

Without any of these outward manifestations, Jesus called John the Baptist a great prophet- greater than all the prophets in the Old Testament. Jesus said John was more than a prophet!

Luke 7:26 "*Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.* 27. This is the one about whom it is written, 'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.' 28. I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Dear friends, I would like to close this up by referring you to the writing of Peter who declared that through the word of God, we have a more sure word of prophecy; any external prophetic word received must confirm, affirm and attest to the WORD. The word of God is the measuring line with which we judge prophets or prophecies. The Christian is not the one looking for whom to tell him/her the problem he/she has. The Christian is that individual who understands the power of redemption and knows that Christ would always lead us in triumph. I must emphasise here that I believe in the ministry of the prophets and the gift of prophecies, but the manifestation of the gifts must be according to the pattern set forth in the scriptures.