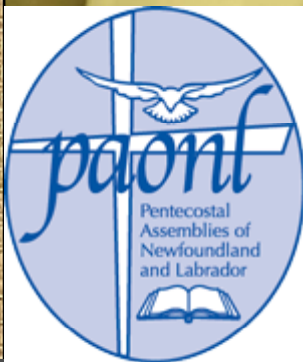


Prophecy and Prophets

Family Camp 2008



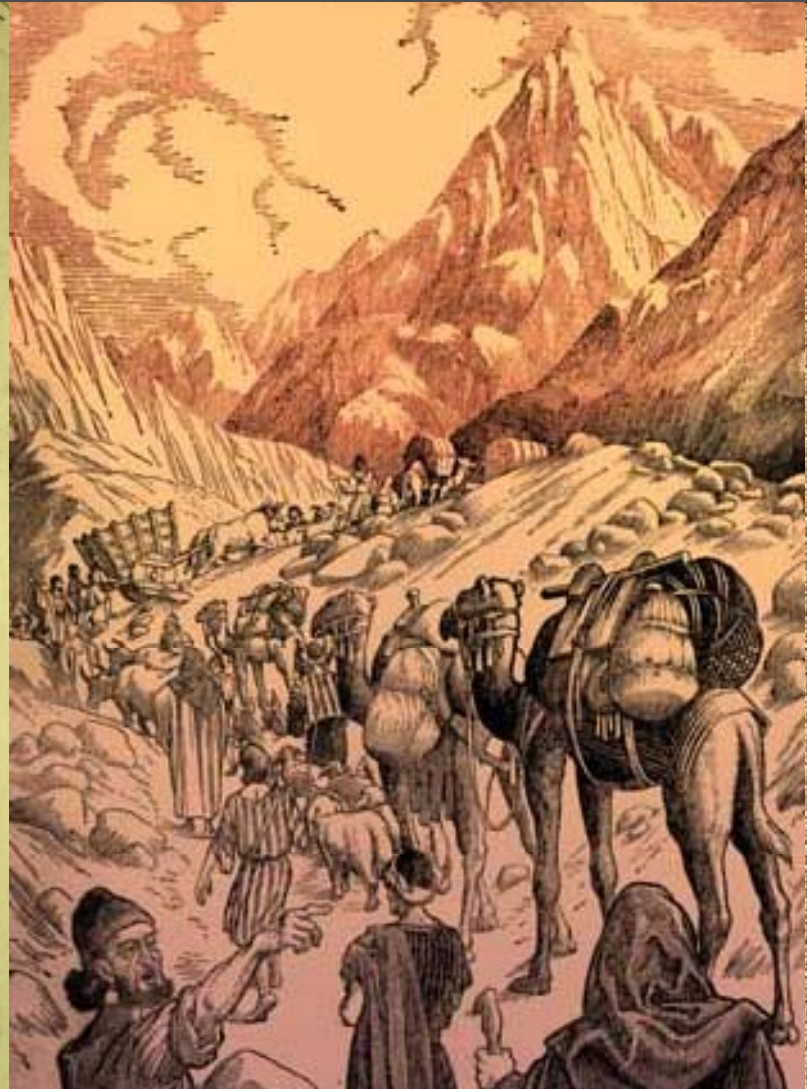
Los reinos
de Israel
y Judá

Territorio de Israel

Territorio de Judá

What is
prophecy?

Are there
Prophets in
the Church
today?



3 Contemporary Views of Prophecy:

- **#1: Prophecy is equivalent to contemporary preaching.**
- **It is the verbal proclamation of Biblical material.**
- **All preaching done under the anointing of the Holy Spirit is therefore prophecy.**

3 Contemporary Views of Prophecy:

•**#2: Prophecy is not preaching, but it has ceased.**

•**Preaching today is not the same as prophecy**

•**Prophecy is revelatory speech that is totally true and authoritative, the same as OT prophecy, however, prophecy no longer exists today**

•**This is the position of the *Cessationists***

3 Contemporary Views of Prophecy:

- **#3: Prophecy is not preaching, and still exists today**
- **This would be the viewpoint of most Pentecostals and Charismatics**
- **Prophecy is NOT preaching, although it can occur during preaching**
- **When prophecy does occur today, it does not carry the same authority as that of OT prophets**

The Spirit in the Old Testament:

- **Within Israel, the Spirit was said to be “on”, “with”, or “upon” Israel’s leaders, enabling them to act with God’s power or reveal His will.**

The Spirit in the Old Testament:

- **God's breath (*rûach*) was portrayed as a charismatic endowment on the judges, such as:**

- Othniel (Judges 3:10)
- Gideon (Judges 6:34)
- Jephthah (Judges 11:29)
- Samson (Judges 14, 15)
- Moses (Numbers 11:17)

The Spirit in the Old Testament:

- **In the majority of these situations, the Spirit of God acted as the channel of communication between God and humanity; thus, the Holy Spirit was known to Judaism as the “Spirit of Prophecy”**

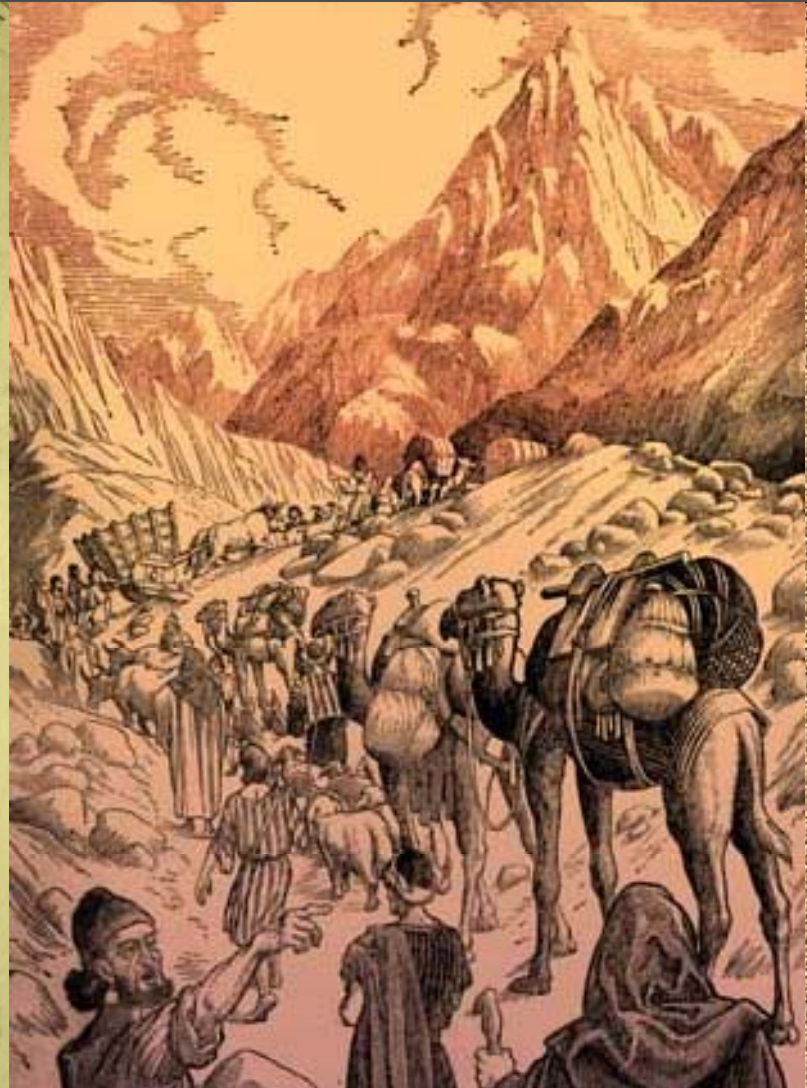
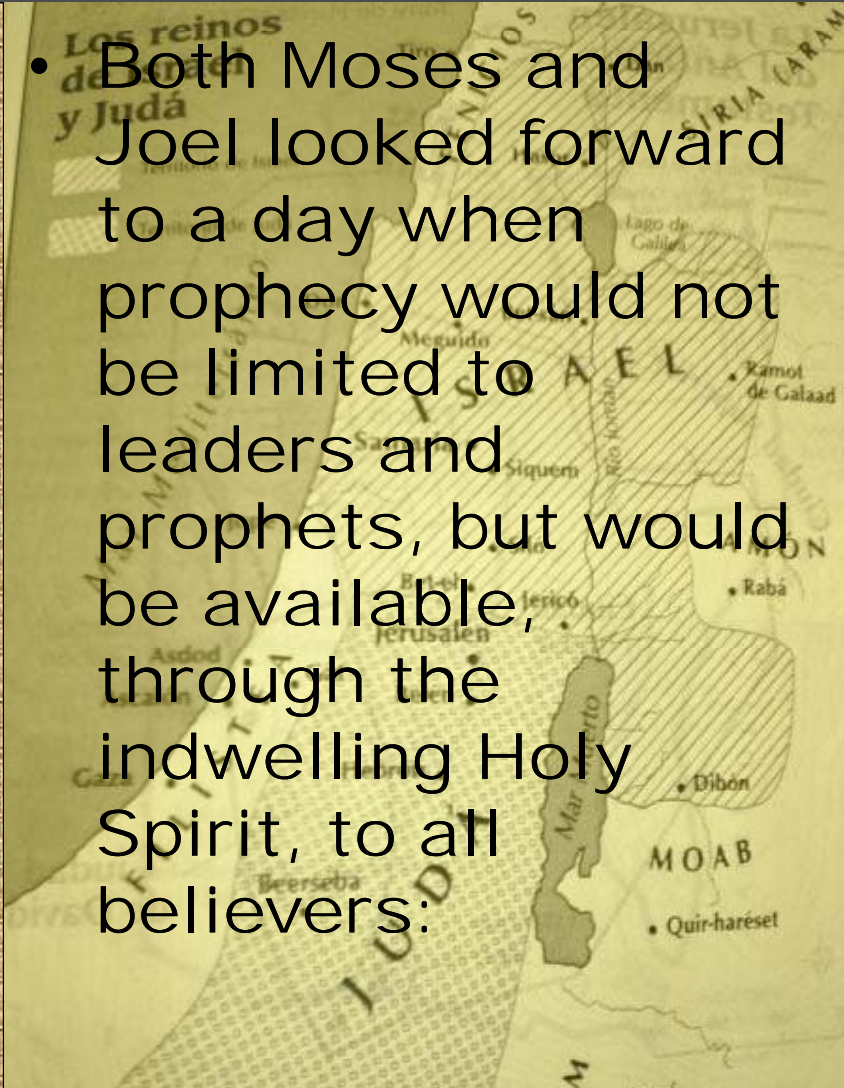
The Spirit in the Old Testament:

- **God did not dwell within those who believed, but allowed His Spirit to “come upon” individuals at certain times**
- **Prophecy was God’s method of speaking to his people.**

The Spirit in the Old Testament:

- **In the Old Testament, God's Prophets spoke His very words:**
- **“I have put my words in his mouth...” Deut 18:18**
- **“And you shall speak my words to them...” Ezek. 2:7**
- **Absolute Divine authority rested upon Prophetic words: Deut 18:19; 1 Sam. 8:7; 1 Kings 20:36; 2 Chron.25:16**

- Both Moses and Joel looked forward to a day when prophecy would not be limited to leaders and prophets, but would be available, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, to all believers:



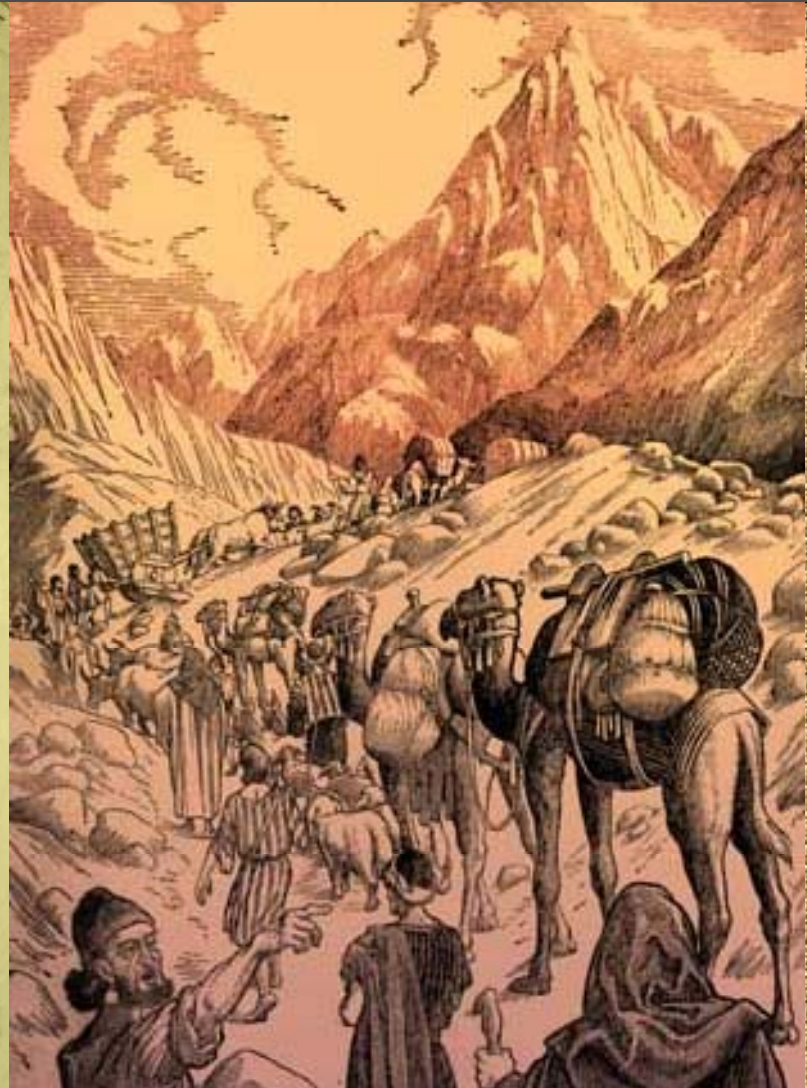
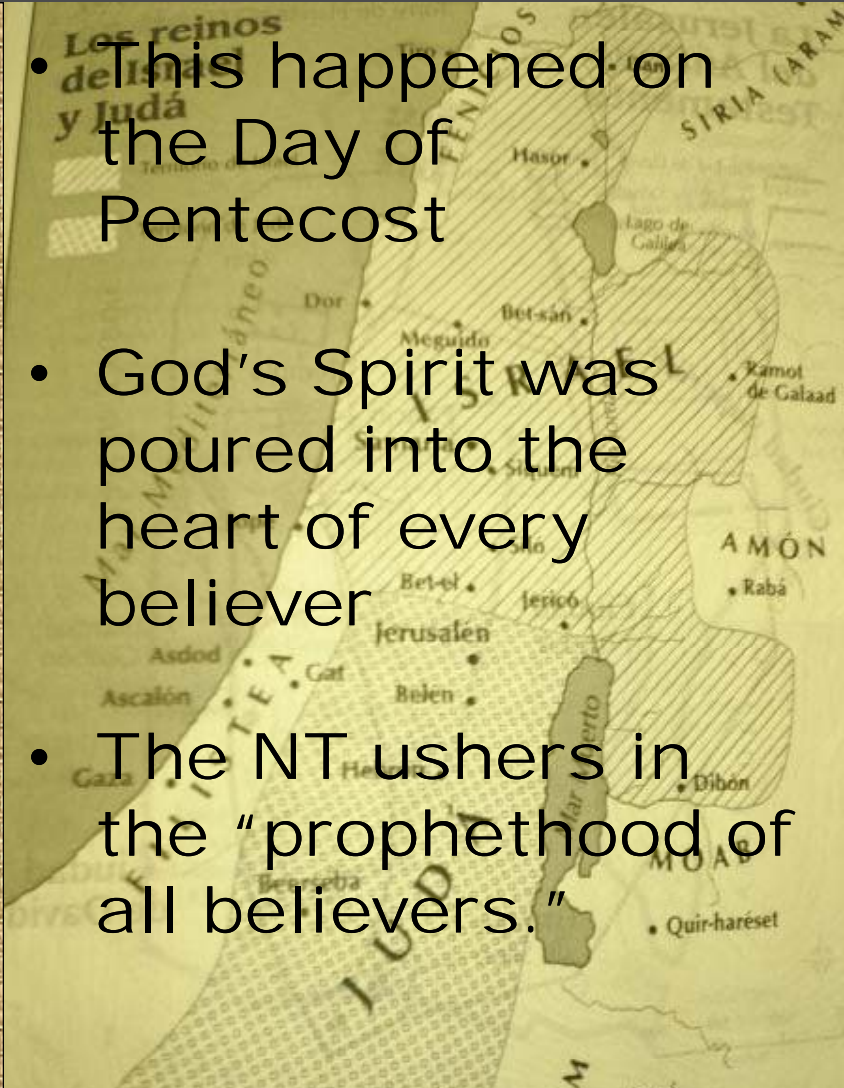
The Spirit in the Old Testament:

- **Num 11:26 However, two men... prophesied in the camp. 27 A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" 29 But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!"**

The Spirit in the Old Testament:

- **Joel 2:28'**And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
- **Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. 29 Even on my servants, both men and women,**
- **I will pour out my Spirit in those days.**

- This happened on the Day of Pentecost
- God's Spirit was poured into the heart of every believer
- The NT ushers in the "prophethood of all believers."



The Foundational N.T. Scriptures:

• **1 Cor 12:7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,**

The Foundational N.T. Scriptures:

•10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

The Foundational N.T. Scriptures:

•Eph 4: 11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's 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,

The Foundational N.T. Scriptures:

•attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves... Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.

Other Scriptures:

- **Acts 11:27-30** A group of prophets went to Antioch and predicted the coming famine
- **Acts 13:1** Lists the various prophets and teachers in Jerusalem
- **Acts 15:22,32** Leaders and prophets from Jerusalem were sent with the council letter to Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia

Other Scriptures:

- **Acts 21:9** Paul stays at the home of Philip the Evangelist who had 4 daughters who prophesied
- **Acts 21:10-11** Agabus, a prophet introduced in Acts 13, prophesies that Paul will be bound and delivered to the Romans by the Jews.
- **1 Cor 14**: Prophecies are to be tested against Apostolic doctrine

Other Scriptures:

- **1 Cor 11:5,6** Women were active as prophets within the assembly
- **Rom 12:6** “One should prophesy according to one’s faith”
- **1 Thess. 5:20** “Do not treat prophecies with contempt”

Other Scriptures:

- **Ephesians 2:20/4:11 Prophets were foundational to the Church**
- **1 Tim.4:14 A prophetic message accompanied Timothy's gift through the laying on of hands.**

From these Scriptures we may note:

- **1) there were recognized prophets in the early churches**
- **2) Many of the apostles also functioned as prophets (Silas, John, Paul, Barnabas – Acts 13:1, 15:32)**
- **3) these prophets did on occasion travel from church to church**

From these Scriptures we may note:

- **4) men and women were recognized as prophets**
- **5) Prophets and prophecy were very important in the early Church**

The Counterpart to OT Prophets was not NT Prophets:

- **It was, in fact, the Apostles. As the OT Prophets spoke the very words of God with Divine authority, so too did the Apostles.**
- **Paul often claimed that his knowledge of the Gospel came directly as a revelation from Jesus:**

The Counterpart to OT Prophets was not NT Prophets:

Gal 1:11 I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. 12 I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

Prophets Submitted to Apostles:

- **Note also, that Prophets were to submit to the Apostles:**
- ***1 Cor 14:37 If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. 38 If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.***

OT vs. NT Prophecy: Questions of Authority

- **OT prophecy was authoritative. Believers were bound to follow each word, as Prophets spoke the very words of God. “Thus saith the Lord...”**
- **Does NT prophecy function the same way? Herein lies the crux of the matter.**

OT vs. NT Prophecy: Questions of Authority

•How much authority does prophecy have in the New Testament?

OT vs. NT Prophecy: Questions of Authority

- The answer lies in the purpose and nature of prophecy in the NT.
- The surprise is not that we do not hear more prophecy in the NT church, but that we hear it at all!

OT vs. NT Prophecy: Questions of Authority

- **God no longer needs prophets to communicate His words to His people; His Spirit now resides in each of us. We commune with our Father at will.**
- **Why did God chose to continue using prophecy?**

OT vs. NT Prophecy: Questions of Authority

- **God chose to continue using prophecy as one of the Gifts of the Spirit, to engage the Body in ministering to one another. (1 Corinthians 12)**
- **Whereas OT prophecy was often judgmental, NT prophecy is meant to edify, strengthen, and encourage the Body, from within the Body, through the Spirit. (1 Corinthians 13 and 14)**

Questions of Authority

- **To prepare God's people for their absence, the Apostles did not point people to the Prophets, but to Scripture: 2 Tim.2:15; Jude 3; 2 Pet.1:19; Rev.22:7**
- **Paul notes that we prophecy now as "through a dark glass; we know only in part." 1 Cor. 13**
- **Consider the fact that Paul permitted women to Prophecy (1 Cor.11:15), but not to teach (1 Tim. 2:12)**

OT vs. NT Prophecy: Questions of Authority

Notice the difference in the way OT and NT prophecy is to be judged:

- **Deut 18:21 You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.**

OT vs. NT Prophecy: Questions of Authority

• Notice the difference in the way OT and NT prophecy is to be judged:

• 1 Cor 14:29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30 And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31 For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.

Question # 1 : Are there Prophets in the Church today?

- **Ephesians 4:11 would seem to suggest there are those who function regularly in the Gift of Prophecy**
- **However: the NT does not give instructions for establishing the Prophet in the governing structure of the Church; it does give direction for establishing leadership through pastors, teachers, elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3)**

Question # 1 : Are there Prophets in the Church today?

- Today, the term “Apostle” and “Prophet” are often applied in terms of authority; this is not supported in Scripture.

Question #2: Can someone prophesy at will?

- **No. Prophecy today functions as one of the Gifts; temporary, glowing through one to another. Some, however, do appear to move in one gift regularly.**

Question #2: Can someone prophesy at will?

•Consider 1 Cor.14:29-33:

•29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30 And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31 For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. 32 The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

Question #3: Is Prophecy escatic?

- **In other words, are we out of it? Does the person prophesying know what they are doing? YES.**
- **1) The prophet can stop to allow another to speak**
- **2) The working of the Spirit within a prophet is not “disorder” (d̄n̄d̄w̄d̄v̄w̄d̄v̄l̄d̄) “frenzied disturbance”**

Question #3: Is Prophecy escatic?

- 3) As the hearers can understand and evaluate the prophecy, so too can the speaker
- 4) Since the prophet was to be aware that another wished to speak, he or she would have to be aware of their surroundings fully.

Question #4: Are we commanded to seek prophecy over us?

•No. We are primarily directed in our own Christian lives by the residing Spirit of God within us. *The pursuit of the latest “Word from God” is unnecessary.* You can have the latest Word from God for you each day in your own devotions.

Question #4: Are we commanded to seek prophecy over us?

•We are, however, called to desire the gift of prophecy, that we might serve others:

•1 Cor 14:1 Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy. 39 Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy...

Question #5: Is Prophecy directed to individuals or to the Church in general?

- **There are examples in both the OT and NT where prophecy was for specific individuals (1 Sam. 13:13; Acts 21:10,11)**
- **Generally, however, recorded prophecy has been for the nation of Israel or surrounding nations in the OT, and for the Body of Christ in the NT.**

Question #6: Do we hear prophecies sometimes or prophesy ourselves but not recognize it as such?

Absolutely. Prophecy is the moving of God's Spirit upon our hearts, revealing something to us, that we then share with the Body.

- **This happens, and has happened many times in the past, without necessarily being called prophecy.**

SUMMARY

- **Prophecy is an important gift to the Church; we should desire to be used in this gift**
- **We are not called to seek prophetic words from others; our relationship with Christ through the Spirit puts us in contact with the Throne of God**

SUMMARY

- **Those regularly used in prophecy may well consider themselves prophets; the NT does not, however, give them special places of authority within the Church**
- **Those in leadership and authority within the Church are called primarily to serve...**