

Prophets & Prophecy in the Life of the Church

Ephesians 4:7-16

November 25, 2007

A Brief Sketch of Verses 7-16:

1. Jesus has gifted each person;
2. Jesus appoints a few to be leaders;
3. Jesus commands them to be humble;
4. Jesus uses them to equip others;
5. Jesus uses all to build up the church until we reach the fullness of Christ!

Prophets & Prophecy:

- A prophet is one who tells forth or foretells the word of the Lord.
- God grants prophetic insight to...
 - Reveal Himself
 - Confirm the Gospel
 - Upbuild the whole church
 - Convict Unbelievers

Prophets & Prophecy:

- Do prophets continue to exist in the life of the church today?
1. The word “prophet” is used 159 times in the New Testament:
 1. 113 refer to offices that no longer exist;
 2. 14 refer to an office that continues to exist;
 3. 20 can go either way;
 4. 12 refer to false prophets.

Prophets & Prophecy:

- Do prophets continue to exist in the life of the church today?
2. The early church fathers attest to the fact that prophets continued to exist (Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*; Ireneaus, *Against Heresies*; *The Didache*)

Prophets & Prophecy:

- Do prophets continue to exist in the life of the church today?
3. Paul's exhortations in 1 Corinthians 14 do not make sense if prophets and prophecy do not continue to exist (vv. 1, 5, 29-32, & 39-40).

1 Thessalonians 5:20-21

- *“Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good.”*
 - *“Despise” means to treat something as of no account, to disdain, to make light of*
 - *“Hold Fast” means to take possession of*

1 Tim. 4:14 & 2 Tim. 1:6-7:

*“**Do not neglect** the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you...For this reason I remind you to **fan into flame** the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”*

Principles from 1 Corinthians 14:

1. Prophecy is meant for the upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation of the whole church (vv. 3-5);
2. We should all earnestly desire to prophesy (vv. 1, 39);
3. More than one should speak, if possible, and all should be tested (v. 29);
4. Prophets are to be held accountable to other prophets (vv. 32-33).