

## What is Prophecy and what it is not – Session 2

Foundation Scriptures: Romans 11:29, Matthew 7:15-18

### **Prophecy vs Divination: Counterfeits to the true prophetic**

1. Examples: Slave girl operating under the spirit of divination (Acts 16:16-19) and Balaam (Numbers 22-24)
  - a. Are supernatural gifts just limited to Christians?
    - i. The Slave girl was evidently gifted to move in the supernatural since she brought her masters much profit (verse 16), so much so that when her masters realised their hope of profit was gone they dragged Paul & Silas off to the authorities of the city.
    - ii. Balaam was evidently gifted and his reputation for getting results was well known and was profitable to him (Number 22:6-7).
  - b. Accuracy and biblical?
    - i. The Slave girl was accurate in her description of Paul and Silas and was biblical in her proclamation (Acts 16:17) note: Paul referred to himself as a bondservant – Romans 1:1, 2Cor 4:5, Titus 1:1)
    - ii. Balaam was accurately able to hear from God (e.g. Numbers 22:9-12, 20, 23:4-5,16).
  - c. What was the method of obtaining supernatural revelation?
    - i. The slave girl operated under a spirit of divination (Lit. “a python spirit”. That expression comes from Gr. Mythology; a python was a snake that guarded the oracles at Delphi.). The slave was medium in contact with demons (i.e. a familiar spirit).
    - ii. Balaam used various methods to obtain supernatural information including divination (Numbers 22:7), omens / sorcery (Numbers 24:1), the Holy Spirit coming upon him(Numbers 24:2).
  - d. There is a thin line between a person moving under the “true” prophecy and false.
    - i. Eg. Balaam operated under both. (Numbers 24:3-9, eg. Balaam moving under the inspiration of the holy Spirit).
    - ii. Even God’s people can be operating under another source apart from the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 2:16, Peter referred to Balaam as a prophet).
2. What was Jesus’ criteria for testing a truly prophetic person?
  - a. Matthew 7:15-18, Jesus talking in the context of false prophets being known by their fruit, not their gifts.
  - b. Balaam could not curse God’s people directly, but he indirectly induced them to sin against God thus bringing a curse upon themselves (Rev. 2:14, 1-22 esp. verse 15).
3. Examples of the Counterfeit.
  - *Divination* – fortune telling or predicting the future. Many techniques incl. Astrology, Palm reading, Crystal Ball gazing, Tarrot cards, reading tea leaves.
  - *Sorcery* –or manipulation of future events by “magic” practices, witchcraft (this is a work of the flesh – Gal 5:20).
  - *Spiritualism* – Communication with the spirit world. Many techniques incl. Necromancy (ouija boards), mediums and seances etc.
  - *Scriptures* – Deut 18: 9-14, Lev. 19:31, Ezek. 13:17-23

## **Prophecy: Conditional or Inevitable? Hinderances to fulfillment of personal prophecy.**

*Statement: Personal Prophecy always depend on our cooperation for it's fulfilment. True or False?*

### **1. Unbelief, the no.1 hinderance.**

- a. Hebrews 3:16 - 4: 1-3. Unbelief cost a generation of Israelites the promised land.
  - i. In God's eyes unbelief in sin.
- b. God's attitude to unbelief
  - i. He takes it very personally (e.g. Numbers 14:11)
  - ii. He removes his hedge of protection (e.g. Numbers 14:12)
  - iii. He will allow his people to forfeit their inheritance (e.g. Numbers 14:22-23)
- c. Unbelief costs us and hurts God.

### **2. War a good warfare in prophecy**

- a. It will always be a fight between the physical evidence and the prophetic word.
  - i. Use the prophecy to challenge the circumstances – not vice versa.  
Example Abraham (Romans 4:17-21)  
“Why is it that after a prophecy is given, the exact opposite of what was spoken seems to occur?” In all probability the enemy was going to attack anyway however God has given us a strengthening word to hold onto and build on. An assurance of His intentions and of victory.
- b. When God gives a prophetic word, He oftens prophecy the end result but not the journey that we must go through in order to reach the fulfillment.
  - i. Example Joseph (Genesis 37) – God did not reveal the process of the fulfillment to Joseph's dreams. Joseph's postive attitude throughout his circumstances was pivotal to the fulfillment of the dreams.
- c. We must ensure that our attitude does not neutralise what God wants to accomplish.

### **3. Disappointment & Disillusionment**

- a. Usually occurs when things don't turn out the way we would like, or because we look to ourselves as a means of fulfillment.
  - i. Example Abraham & Sarah.
    - Both Abraham & Sarah laughed at the thought of producing a child (Gen. 17:17, 18:12) Why?
    - Sarah & hagar, conflict in the home as a result of trying to make a prophecy come true instead of waiting for God's timing and way (Gen. 16:1-6).
    - There is often a gap between the promise and the provision.
    - How we behave and what we believe as we occupy is vital.

4. **Established opinions & thinking – mindsets / strongholds**
  - a. If people have preconceptions. E.g self, theology held etc.
  - b. If prophecy doesn't line up with what we think then we reject it, e.g the Jews had a political concept of the Messiah (Matt. 16:21-23).
  - c. If we have a problem with the messenger (i.e. the vessel that God uses), or still view a person through the eyes of their past history then we can miss the heart of God's message.
  - d. If we are out of fellowship with God and / or God's people.
  
5. **Misunderstanding tenses and timings.**
  - a. Sometimes we try to understand an event that the Lord has locked up for an appointed time to be revealed.
  - b. We are living in chapter 2 but the prophecy is for chapter 3 in our lives, even though the prophecy was given in the present tense.
  - c. Or vice versa, eg we are expecting the prophecy to have a future fulfillment but the time of fulfillment is now (eg. John 11: 23-26).
  
6. **Self Image**
  - a. Sometimes people can have a powerful misconception about themselves.
  - b. Negative self worth, or a failure complex can make it hard to receive and cooperate with God's words (Eg Moses in Exodus 3:11, 4:10)
  
7. **Prophecy usually refers to the impossible**
  - a. We must focus our vision on the promise and God's ability to fulfil it.
  - b. If the church is going to fulfil it's Kingdom mandate and goals then we must take on God assignments that are impossible for us in the natural to complete.
  - c. These assignments will have their roots in the prophetic. Examples: Exodus 14 (Crossing the red sea); Joshua 6 (The walls of Jericho); Matthew 14:28-29 (Peter walking on water).
  - d. God accepts no substitute for obedience.