

## Prophecy

cessationalist vs. charismatic

A debate between a cessationalist, Ian Hamilton, and Wayne Grudem  
<http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2012/02/23/a-debate-on-the-continuation-of-prophecy/>

Wayne Grudem: "The Gift of Prophecy"/Systematic theology

John Piper sermon on prophecy: <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/the-authority-and-nature-of-the-gift-of-prophecy>

Richard Gaffin - a cessationalist - argues  
[http://www.opc.org/new\\_horizons/NH02/01d.html](http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH02/01d.html)

### What do we mean when we say "God is speaking"?

Note: incredibly authoritative!  
very serious

Spoke world into being  
Man does not live on bread alone...  
false prophets...

very thoughtful indeed before take this lang upon our lips ...

Argue 2 things...

*on one hand*: very imp reserve "word of the Lord", "God says" for Bible cos only Scripture is authoritative and sufficient

*on other hand*: we can also say God can and does inspire ideas, thoughts, feelings, wisdom, revelations/prophecies in us to encourage and inspire us. These are non-authoritative and should not be called "God's word", nor made functionally central for us.

### What's the role of the Bible in our church and for us as Christians?

absolutely central!

special revelation (and general revelation)

living, covenant-binding word  
authoritative (and self-attesting)  
inerrant  
sufficient (canon is closed)

pair of glasses.... we know God as well as we have read, meditated on,  
believed and obeyed the Scriptures

over experiences, reason and tradition

temptation narrative.... Emmaus

### **Distortions in our approach to Bible**

1. Intellectualistic approach

2. "Confucius say..." Devil uses the Bible

3. Officially high position but in practice way hear God = thoughts in my mind  
parallel approach (Spirit and Word approach)  
Bible marginalized (like encyclopaedia)...  
danger of false division between personal and impersonal

### **How do we guard against these distortions?**

1. Meditation, prayer and illumination

2. Study...use of the mind

3. and 4. Spirit and word are connected; expositional teaching

### **Gift of prophecy**

#### **What is it?**

Spirit-inspired, non-authoritative speech  
= reporting something that God has laid on their heart or brought to mind, but  
not have authority of God's word  
broad category: Scripture verse, thought, par application of Bible, unknown  
detail, mental picture

1 Cor 14:30-31 “revelation” (cf. Phil 3:15, Rom 1:18, Eph 1:17)

note: not primarily about predicting the future

gift of prophecy 1 Cor 12:10

### **What authority does it have?**

NT equivalent of OT prophets are the apostles (2 Pet 3:2, 1 Thess 2:13)  
meaning of word prophet = “making known”

Non-authoritative:

Acts 21:4

21:10-11

1 Thess 5:19-21

1 Cor 14:29-38 - all prophecies are to be tested  
apostolic succession

respect but not obedience...  
only have to obey Scripture

### **What is the purpose of prophecy?**

encouragement, edification (1 Cor 14:3, 4)  
evangelistic effect (1 Cor 14:24-25)

### **How much should we be concerned with the gift of prophecy?**

not everyone has the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 12:29)  
should earnestly desire it (1 Cor 14:1) - spiritually impoverished without it (1 Thess 5:20)  
we should be praying for it and we should not hold back on it  
we'll lack sth if we don't practice it

### **What are the problems associated with the exercise of the gift of prophecy?**

1. Over-authoritative delivery
2. Exercise of a gift by untaught and immature people, or untaught/immature people giving a prophet too much influence
3. Manipulation and gullibility
4. Specificity
5. False prophecy (2 Thess 2:1-2)

## **How should it be practiced?**

1. Identify and encourage gifting (affinity, ability, opportunity)
2. Need opportunities
3. Non-authoritative delivery
4. Orderly way (1 Cor 14:32)
5. Accountability
6. With love/servant-heartedness
7. It's OK to delay and pray!

## **Discernment and prophecy**

can be 1. true 2. mixed bag 3. untrue 4. false/misleading

1. the character of the prophet
2. the content of the prophecy

### *negative evaluative questions....*

Is anyone vulnerable in this situation? How might what is said affect them?  
Could what I'm saying be damaging to anyone?  
Could what I'm saying lead anyone into temptation (particularly: pride)?  
Could what I'm saying be destructive of people/church?  
Could what I'm saying be manipulative? Are there wrong motives in my heart?

### *positive evaluative questions....*

Does this exalt Scriptural truth? (not just: does it contradict it?) further away from scripture it is less authoritative it is  
Does this exalt God or man?  
Is it holy and good?  
Is it loving?  
Is it wise?  
Does it edify and encourage?

3. our wisdom  
(don't forget this!)

is this in accord with what I can see?  
does it strike me as foolish/odd or correct/insightful?

*Principles that govern prophecy are not different from principles that govern my own personal walk with God*