

Fostering Spiritual Discernment in the Social Media Age

In recent weeks I have fielded more questions about failed predictive prophecies than the last 15 years of ministry combined. Believers consistently point to three public prophecies concerning 2020 that garnered widespread consensus among many popular prophets:

1. 2020 will be a year of stadiums and revival/"Stadium Christianity."
2. The COVID-19 "plague" will end by Passover.
3. President Trump will win reelection.

One clear reason for the unusual spike in these conversations is our social media culture. The very nature of our dynamically connected age means that these predictive words are shared far and wide, leaving many with an unavoidable sense that these are "thus saith the Lord" situations. There was also no indication in these predictions of the various ways prophetic pronouncements function in Scripture. This left the public to conclude these words must be decrees from God that guaranteed the outcomes the prophecies specified. Yet this is actually one of the least frequent functions of prophecy in Scripture.

As the epic narrative of 2020 comes to a close, we are confronted by the hard fact that these predictions have not yet been fulfilled. Not only have stadiums been closed throughout this year but churches have, too, forcing Christian gatherings online or into much smaller groups than many North American churchgoers are accustomed. Stadium gatherings have not remotely been part of the 2020 Christian landscape. As for the COVID-19 prediction, Passover passed us by eight months

ago, and now a second wave has hit much of the Western world, bringing the death count from the virus to over 300,000 in the United States alone. Lastly, we need to see supernatural intervention for President Trump to be elected to a second term.

This about-face moment is causing many who follow prophetic ministries to appropriately question the overall health of the prophetic movement—especially in light of our dynamically connected context.

Are the prophets providing follow-up to predictions?

Who is holding these influencers accountable for their words?

What is the testimony we are giving the world in all of this?

These are some of the questions that I have fielded in this season.

On a positive note, I see two distinct benefits of the popularity of these 2020 prophecies. First, it has given us a unique opportunity to corporately test predictions with a simple question: did the words come to pass? I noted this in March when the Passover prediction widely circulated. Secondly, many are now eager to think more critically about how we can develop healthier prophetic culture in a social media age.

It is in this spirit that I write this article.

In what follows, I provide five steps that we who follow prophetic ministries can take to foster greater accuracy and integrity in the prophetic in our social media age.

Read the rest of the article [here](#), and listen to the *Jesus Movement Now* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eo}